

*OUT AMONG THE
ANIMALS . . .*

MALONE





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THE AUTHOR.

OUT AMONG THE ANIMALS

TALKS WITH BOYS AND GIRLS ABOUT
THEIR OUTDOOR FRIENDS

By Mrs. Eva Williams Malone

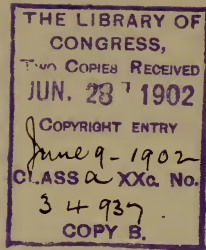


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EDITOR'S NOTE.

THE matter contained in this volume was originally prepared for the *Children's Visitor*. Thousands of children have enjoyed these weekly talks. When the *Visitor* asked its readers to name such series as ought to be put into permanent form, few were found more popular than Mrs. Malone's "Natural History Studies," which is reprinted in book form as "Out among the Animals." The volume is, therefore, published largely in response to a demand of our young people.

We feel sure that these stories, so charmingly told, will enlarge the knowledge of the youthful readers and lead them to a more intelligent sympathy with all the animal life of the world. These short studies will be found truly ennobling to children, and may be made the basis of quite a wide range of instruction in thoughtful households.

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BUGS AND BEETLES.

APRIL, with her awakening sunshine and freshening showers, took Fletcher much out of doors. Every hour that could be spared from the schoolroom he delighted to spend in the ampler schoolhouse of Nature, and he found her a wonderful teacher. Prof. Craig too loved Nature in all her varying moods, and he knew that if Fletcher would keep his eyes and mind open the month of April held many secrets in



BEETLE, BUG, AND PUPA.

trust. As the world about him began to awaken from its winter's nap Fletcher's interest in lions and tigers and kindred savage beasts waned visibly, while birds and bees, bugs and beetles, assumed fresh importance in his eyes. As the insects began to flit through the air Fletcher's "collection" increased visibly, and his knowledge increased in proportion.

Uncle Si watched "dat chile's" researches into the vast storehouse of nature with the keenest pride and delight; and if any one had dared to

assert that the State of Tennessee held a “mo’ pierter ur mo’ high-larnt” boy than Fletcher Beaumont, there would have been a fight on the spot.

“Uncle Si,” said Fletcher one day, as Uncle Si came in with a tin can in his hand to rest awhile from the back-breaking occupation of “buggin’ dem I’sh ’taters,” “can you tell me the difference between a bug and a beetle?”

The old man pulled his wool in a meditative manner, and at last replied: “I dunno ez dere is enny diffunce. I’s e alluz thawt dat er bug am



BUG AND ITS EGG.

er beetle an’ er beetle am er bug. I jes ’lowed people calls ’em ‘beetles’ sorter lak dey calls ’taters ‘tubers’—when dey wants ter be kinder airyfied.”

Fletcher smiled dubiously and said: “No, Uncle Si; I don’t think that’s it.

There is a difference, I know; but I can’t tell just what it is. But here comes the Professor. We’ll have to ask him.”

When appealed to the Professor replied: “Your idea, Uncle Si, that bugs and beetles are one and the same is a very common one; but really there is quite a difference, and the difference is shown from the hour the egg is hatched.

The mother beetle lays her eggs, and soon after dies. When the eggs are hatched they do not look like beetles at all, but are little, soft, sometimes woolly, grubs; and, like the butterfly, they cast off their skin several times—indeed, it sometimes take several summers to change a grub into a full-grown beetle. But the baby bug is different; he is much like his parents, only not so perfect. He moves about freely all the time, and never weaves a little house around himself and goes to sleep, as the grub of the beetle does. Beetles do not eat as bugs do. Beetles have horny, teethlike jaws, and sometimes teeth; they gnaw and grind and chew their food. But bugs suck in their food, and for that reason their mouths are formed with three or four joints, as the naturalists say, for ‘suctorial purposes.’ Bugs and beetles are wonderfully interesting, and we shall resume the subject whenever you wish.”

UNCLE SI'S ENEMIES.

ONE balmy morning in the latter half of April Uncle Si presented himself before Mr. Beaumont, and his honest old face was the very picture of dejection. In his hand he held an Irish potato leaf, and he pointed to a queer little patch of yellow specks on the under side as he said: "Jes look er dar, master! Lessen yer git dat Parish green we all's I'sh 'tater crap gwin' ter be bodaciously rooind."

"Potato bugs, Uncle Si?"

"Yes, sah; an' dis am de fust yeah I'se ebber seed 'em fo' June, which gibbs me de insurance dat dis am gwin' ter be er bad tater yeah. Gin'al-ly me'n dis ol' tin can kin keep 'em on de jump, but whenebber I sees dem yaller aigs in Aprile,

I jes gibbs up an' calls in de Parish green. I'se been wraslin' wid 'em fur two weeks, an' peahs lak when I kills *one two* comes t' de funer'l. De Puf-fesser done tole me yistiddy dem



COLORADO BEETLE AND LARVA.

'tater bugs, ur Colorado beetles, ez he calls 'em, hatches free gangs ebber season; an' effen dat's de case, an' dey's gun deir wuk dis yearly, hit'll tak mo' fly blisters den dem Spanishers kin spar' t' keep dis po' ol' back o' mine in wukkin' order."

"All right, Uncle Si," responded Mr. Beaumont; "you shall certainly have the Paris green. I'll send Fletcher to town for it after dinner. By the way, did you know that your potato bug is another example of the bug that is not a bug?"

"Yes, sah; I 'lowed dat wer' de fack when I heah de Puffesser, who am alluz er master han' t' call ebbert'ing proper, talkin' t' little mas' 'bout de potato beetle."

"Yes; the potato beetle was never known in what we call the East until 1859, when folks began to travel freely to the West and the country began to be settled up. Before that it lived out in Colorado and ate a certain wild plant that grows there; but it soon found out that it would rather eat Irish potato plants than *solanum rostratum*, as the wild plant is called, and ever since it has been coming about one hundred miles farther east every season, until now it has reached the Atlantic coast."

"I wish t' my soul hit ud trabel clean inter de oshun," said Uncle Si devoutly, "fur er mo' meaner, greedier little pest dan dem slick,

streakedy young 'tater bugs I ain' nebber foun'. Why, suh, I bleeb de berry aigs is hatched er gnawin'; an' when two ur free o' dem ol' hahd-backed daddy 'tater bugs lites on t' er vine yer mout ez well say good-by t' hit. So effen yer pleeze, mas', doan' yer fergit dat Parish green!" And Uncle Si ambled off with vengeful thoughts of his old enemy, the Colorado potato beetle.

CANTHARIDES.

UNCLE SI had bent and stooped so much during the last week in his faithful efforts to “bug dem ’taters” that, as he expressed it, he was “down in de back.” The old man was subject to these attacks, and there had been only one remedy found to give him relief.

“Uncle Si, you’ll have to have a fly blister,” said Mrs. Beaumont as she entered the cabin to find Uncle Si lying prone upon the floor in front of the fire and crying lustily: “O, my back! my back!”

Mrs. Beaumont sent Dilsy to the “big house,”



CANTHARIDES, SPANISH FLIES, OR BLISTERING BEETLE.

and soon the fly blister was applied, and Uncle Si began to get easier; and as his pains were loosened so was his tongue. “Mistis,” he said, “I’d lak to kno’ why dem blisters am called ‘fly blisters.’ Am it kase dey mek de mis’ry fly?”

“Hardly that, Uncle Si,” said Mrs. Beaumont, settling herself in a chair, content to amuse the old darky for a while. “They are called ‘fly blisters’ because they are made of a kind of fly which the ‘skyentifical’ men, as you say, call ‘cantharides.’ Common people are content to call them ‘Spanish flies.’”

“Effen deys Spanish,” said Uncle Si, chuckling with a brilliant idea all his own, “why didn’ dem Spanishers clap ’em on t’ ou’ soljers? Den dey wouldn’ er fit ’em much; leas’ dey wouldn’ effen dey all draws lak dis’n on my ol’ back.”

“What a pity they did not think of that, Uncle Si!” said Mrs. Beaumont, willing to humor the old darky’s fancy. “But Spain is not the only country where cantharides are found. They are caught in France, Germany, Italy, and a cold, cold country they call Siberia; and sometimes a few of them wander over to England.”

“Am de critter a bug?” asked Uncle Si, who, since the discussion about the bugs and beetles had been examining every insect he laid his hands on to find out whether it was a bug or a beetle.

“No, Uncle Si; it is not a bug, but it is a large, bright golden-green or bluish beetle. It is much larger than a common house fly; it is from half an inch to an inch long. Unlike most animals, the female is larger than the male.”

“How dey kotch dem flies?” asked Uncle Si. “Mebbe dey puts fly paper roun’ sose dey gits stuck on t’ it.”

“No; they go out very late in the evening or early in the morning, when the flies are wet with dew and are drowsy. They spread a cloth under the trees where the flies collect, and shake the trees, just like some people get a swarm of bees. You see, these flies feed on the leaves of certain trees, and it is not so very hard to get them. They are killed, dried, and pressed, then put into bottles and sent all over the world.”

“I can’t jes figger hit out how dem flies gwin’ ter tek de mis’ry out o’ my back. Why couldn’ we jes ketch er passel ob ou’ own flies fur de puppus?”

“That would not do, Uncle Si. These cantharides are very poisonous, and are what doctors call a ‘counterirritant’—just like you say ‘the hair of the dog is good for the bite.’”

“I ’gin ter see de p’int,” said Uncle Si, who by this time was able to sit up. “Hit’s er case o’ pizen ketch pizen. I sholy am much erbleeged t’ yer, mistis; an’ I lakwise am much erbleeged t’ dem Spanish flies.”

WEEVILS, AND HOW THEY COME.

“PROFESSOR,” said Fletcher one morning as he and the Professor started for their morning walk, “bug-huntin’,” as Uncle Si said, “do you know the weevils have gotten into our wheat? I heard Uncle Si tell father so yesterday. Let’s go down to the granary and see if we can find any, for, while I have heard of them all my life, I don’t think I ever saw a weevil.”

So they went to the granary, where Mr. Beaumont’s beautiful wheat had been stored. In a few moments Fletcher cried out in triumph, “Here is one of the rascals!” and he brought to



WEEVILS AND WEEVIL-EATEN WHEAT, MAGNIFIED.

the Professor a small, pitchy-red beetle about one-eighth of an inch long.

“Yes,” said the Professor, “that is the genu-

ine *Calandra granaria*, or grain beetle; and I dare say it has done more harm in proportion to its size than any other little creature in America."

"But how do weevils get into wheat?" asked Fletcher.

"That is easily explained, my boy. The female hides herself among the grains of wheat, and into each grain, or as many as she can work on, she bores a little hole and in it lays an egg. Then she closes up the hole with a glutinous substance, and goes on to another grain and does the same thing. Very soon the egg is hatched, and the baby weevil in the grain of wheat has what you would call 'a soft job.' It has two strong gnawers, and it just stays in there and eats out the heart of the wheat grain. In about ten days it comes out of its cage a perfect weevil."

"I understand now why they put 'weevil wheat' into water and throw away all that floats," said Fletcher. "It's because the wheat that floats has all the substance eaten out of it, and is worthless."

"That's just it," replied the Professor; "and it is said that over twenty-three thousand weevils may come from a single pair in one season. So you see how very destructive they must be."

"Is the grain weevil the only sort of weevil

there is?" asked Fletcher as he gathered up a handful of wheat to examine under the microscope.

"Ah, no indeed! I wish it were; but almost every species of tree, and even the sugar cane, has its own peculiar weevil. The palm tree weevil is one of the largest of its kind. It is two inches long, and its *larvæ* are cooked and eaten as great delicacies by the people of the West Indies. Many kinds of weevils bore beneath the bark of trees, and destroy great quantities of timber in this way. Then there is the weevil whose burrows just under the bark of trees look so much like printed characters that this is called the typographic beetle. Do not forget, now, that the weevil is a *beetle*, and not a *bug*."

GNATS AND MOSQUITOES.

“MAMMA,” said a baby mosquito as it came from its pupa case on the top of Uncle Si’s “rain barrel,” “I am so lonesome. Won’t you let me



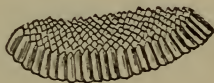
GNATS.

go down to the pond and play with Uncle Gnat’s little boys and girls?”

“*U n c l e*
Gnat, indeed!

Who ever put that notion into your head, you misguided child? If I ever do hear of you claiming kin with those low-born Gnats, I’ll make you go to bed in the very bottom of the rain barrel!”

“But, mamma, Prof. Oracle Gnat said that he had been studying up on our family history, and there was not one bit of difference between a gnat and a mosquito.”



EGGS OF GNAT.

At this Mrs. Mosquito gave a contemptuous curl of her antennæ and retorted with wrath: “And what does *he* know about it—raised in a

horsepond and never a mile away from where he was born?"

"Why, mamma, *I* was raised in a *rain barrel*, and I think a pond is lots nicer than a barrel."



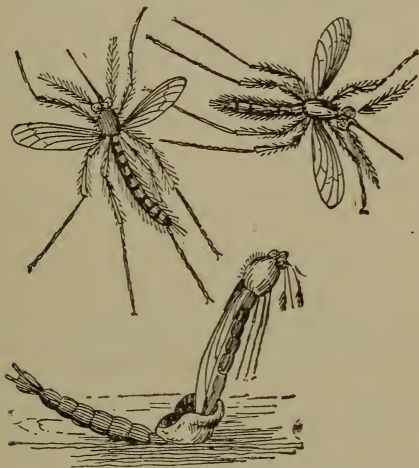
LARVA OF GNAT (WIGGLETAIL.)

"That's all you know about it, you saucy boy. Why, the very name is enough to show that there is a difference. '*Mosquito*' is Spanish, and has an aristocratic sound, while '*Gnat*'—tut! it's ridiculous. *My* family came from Cuba, and have some of the very best blood of the land in their veins!"

Just then Sir Oracle Gnat came buzzing by, and called out "Cousin! cousin!" in such a taunting way that Mrs. Mosquito became so indignant that she sank to the bottom of the rain barrel and was drowned.

"Stuck up thing!" chuckled Sir Gnat. "Serves her right! When people get too conceited to own their family they deserve to be drowned. The idea! as if anybody who had two grains of wit did not know that mosquito is nothing but a peculiar kind of gnat. We all belong to the Diptera family; and if Mrs. Mosquito had ever studied the matter, she would know that her name means 'little fly.' She's a little fly, and

I'm a little fly. We both are hatched on the water, and she thinks because she has some friends in Louisiana and those Southern countries, and because her folks *did* come from Cuba to this country, that she can put on airs.



EMERGING FROM WIGGLETAILS.

I guess I know a thing or two. I've watched young gnats and I've watched young mosquitoes, and they look for all the world alike, and they act alike, too. They dive up and down and jerk about and are never still a minute. Mrs. Mosquito says her family cannot live without human blood, but there are thousands of mosquitoes that never taste blood, and just live by

getting honey from the flowers like any common gnat. About the only real difference between a mosquito and us other gnats is that *we* can live anywhere that a human being can find the way, but unless a mosquito has a hot sun and a lot of stagnated water it gets homesick right away, and wants to move. So if anybody wants to put on airs and refuse to 'cousin,' I think *I'm* the one!" And Sir Oracle sailed away with a self-satisfied buzz.

A SAWFLY'S STORY.

“I’m a jolly Hymenoptera,” a little sawfly said;
“I yield to no bug living, and scarce to any dead—
For my family relations are known from sea to sea,
From the wasps and ants and horntails to the tireless
little bee.

Though we differ in our habits and the manner of our
life,

That gives us no occasion for hatred or for strife.

The bee that hoards his honey, the wasp with cruel
sting,

The ant, that faithful worker, must his own lesson
bring.

But as for me I’ll tell you the way a sawfly works,
And show you that, though quiet, he ne’er his duty
shirks.

My kindred call me ‘Carpenter,’ and you’ll know
the reason why

When I’ve told my little story, as I’ll tell it by and
by.

Some think I’m like the hornet, but I lack his cruel
stings;

And I’d scorn to bring the sorrow that my cousin
hornet brings.

I have four brown wings as gauzy as the thinnest,
finest lace,

A steel-blue jacket showing of yellow just a trace;

And when I draw my black cap over my little mug,

I’m sure that you will own me a very handsome bug.✓

Yet ’tis not in my beauty I feel the greatest pride,

For I've a knack of *business* that no one dare deride.
I carry 'neath my body two cunning little saws,
And I am working with them when others work their
jaws.

My thin wings bear me swiftly to yonder leafy tree,
The spot that I have chosen for my cradle bed to be.
My little saws will serve me to do the work with ease—
I slit a leaf, and in it drop an egg whene'er I please.
And in these slits will gather the sap from day to
day,
Making a nest so cozy to hide my babes away.



You've seen these spots on leaflets—perhaps have
called them "galls,"
And little dreaming, maybe, the fate that them be-
falls.
But there they lie all hidden—so safe from human
ken,
Until God's time appointed, and they will come forth
then,
Green, striped, tender babies—what wondrous mys-
tery,

That some day in the future each will a sawfly be!
With legs a score and over they quit their cradle
leaf.

What verdure they encounter will surely come to
grief.

They eat and eat, and, eating, they grow and grow
and grow!

And Fletcher says, with wonder, "What kills the leaf-
lets so?"

But, ah! these larval babies have learned their lesson
well,

And their story of destruction they never, never tell.
At last, replete with fatness, they softly creep away,
Weave a web about them, and hide for many a day.
Down in the brown earth's bosom, down 'neath the
kindly sod,

Till spring, the radiant goddess, shall give imperial
nod.

Then swift they cast their garments, poor garments
old and worn!

And from the hardened casement a sawfly bright is
born,

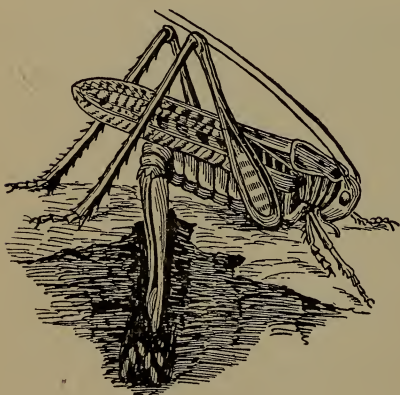
With wings of filmy beauty that glisten in the sun,
And then I feel with rapture that my work on earth
is done."

UNCLE SI'S "HOPPERGRASS" AND OTHER INSECTS.

SINCE Fletcher had begun to observe the myriad forms of insect life which swarmed and buzzed about him he was amazed at the wonderful truths to which he had before been blind. He knew that bugs and beetles and all sorts of minute creatures were pretty numerous, but when the Professor told him that wise men had already found out more than eighty thousand kinds of beetles and over two hundred thousand

varieties of other insects he fairly held his breath in astonishment.

"And yet," said the Professor, "the subject is only in its infancy; and I think it more than likely that you, Fletcher, will



GRASSHOPPER.

live to see a million different insects classified and their wonderful ways described by the men

who are giving their whole lives to this study. Insects are found everywhere; even in the land of everlasting ice, where man can scarcely live, are seen brilliant, bright-hued butterflies; but, of course, in tropical countries, where flowers and vegetation are most luxuriant, we find the insect world more fully represented."

"How long do insects live?" asked Fletcher, as he pinned a fine butterfly securely into his "collection."

"Their lives vary. Bees and ants are the longest lived, queen bees living at least seven years; the shortest lived are some species of May flies, which live only twenty-four hours. Some insects will require three years to pass through the various stages before they become perfect creatures, and then will die in a few days. Of course insects will come to maturity more quickly in warm than



LOCUST.

in cold weather. The common house fly will change from an embryo to a perfect fly in a few days when the weather is soft and balmy, but in cold weather it takes it much longer."

At this point of the conversation Uncle Si's

wrinkled face peered into the window, and he said: "Is dis heah t'ing er locus', ur would yo' call hit er hoppergrass?"

Uncle Si cautiously uncovered a small space in the crown of his hat, and as he peeped in a long-legged creature hopped without ceremony into the middle of the room.

"Why, that is nothing but a grasshopper, Uncle Si. See his short, stout feelers and his three-jointed legs! The true locust has long feelers that look like threads, and his limbs are four-jointed."

"Well, fur my part, I can't skasely tell de hoppergrass f'um de locus'."

"They are so very much alike that many of the books treat them together. The Western locust that travels over the country and is so much dreaded by the farmers is really not a locust in the true sense, but is only a very bad sort of grasshopper. Locusts and grasshoppers are not like those insects which go into the grub state, and lie harmless for a time. A young locust and a young grasshopper are busy eating from the time they are hatched. They do not get their wings for some time, but they get along very nicely without them, and manage to do so much damage wherever they feed that one might well wish for their wings to come, so that they could fly away."

UNCLE SI'S CRICKETS.

ONE chilly March evening as Uncle Si entered his cabin he heard a queer, shuffling noise, and as he approached the fireside he discerned a ludicrous figure on all fours vigorously poking a stick into a hole under the stone hearth. Approaching, Uncle Si gave the recumbent figure a vigorous cuff, and cried out in tones of unaffected anger: "What in de name o' peace do yer mean, yer little imp, er bodderin' wid my crickets? Git up f'um dere dis berry minnit an' lite out o' dis heah house! Tell yer mammy effen she doan' gib yer er good whuppin, I 'low t' do it myse'f;" and Uncle Si started the offending pickaninny off at a full trot.

"Why, what in the world is the matter, Uncle Si?" asked Fletcher, entering the back door just in time to see the urchin fly out of the front.

"Why, honey, hit's dat pesky little Jake bin bodderin' my crickets ergin. I done tol' him an' tol' 'im t' lef' 'em 'lone, an' ebber time my back am turned he am er pokin' at 'em ergin."



HOUSE CRICKET.

"But why do you think so much of those crickets, Uncle Si?"

They do you no earthly good," said Fletcher teasingly.

"Now dat's all yer kno' 'bout hit, chile. Dem's my luck crickets; an' effen dey is druv' erway, dis ol' niggah'll happen t' sumpin' turrible. Doan' yer nebber dribe er cricket 'way f'um de hayth, whatebber yer does."

"Do you ever see your crickets, Uncle Si?" queried Fletcher, who liked to draw the old man on to talk.

"Law, yes, 'ndeed! I scatters crumbs by de hole, an' effen dere ain' nobody heah but me, de ol' man an' de ol' 'oman dey comes out an' sets on de wahn rocks ez naiborly ez yer please."

"What do they look like, Uncle Si?"

"Well, dey is sorter grayish-yaller, trimmed up wid brown, an' is got pow'ful long, slim laigs. Yer mout t'ink dat de music dey meks comes f'um dere mouf, but hit doan'. I'se watched 'em, an' de ol' 'oman doan' mek no soun' 'tall; an' de ol' man mek dat libely noise



MOLE CRICKET

by kinder scrapin' he's wings tergedder. De 'ol 'oman, she hab er sha'p pint lak er needle at de

een ob her littl' body, an' she uses dat ter poke holes in de groun' t' lay 'er aigs in. I'se hearn folks say dat one cricket'll lay ober two hunderd aigs; but she doan' bodder herse'f no mo' 'bout 'em atter dey're laid. She mos' gin'ally dies putty soon; but de young crickets dey hatch out in de spring an' go t' work on whatebber green truck dey kin fin'. Yer see, mos' o' de ol' crickets dies indurin' de winter, an' hit 'pen' on dem aigs dat de ol' mammy done lef' in de groun' t' keep up de breed."

"Did you ever see any of the young crickets, Uncle Si?"

"Yes, 'ndeed; many er time. Dey looks jes p'int-blank lak de ol' uns, only dere wings ain' nuffin but little scales. In cose dey grows out atter er while. Now dese crickets o' mine, dey libs all winter, kase dat hayth doan' nebber git col', an' de col' am what mos'ly kill 'em. Mine am house crickets, which am de mos' frien'lies' an' de mos' pierces' ob all. Dere's fiel' crickets and mole crickets, which am mo' bigger and mo' boddersome dan de house crickets, bekase dey gnaws de roots o' vines an' wigertables. I 'is heah dat de house cricket'll gnaw cyarpets, but as my cyarpet ain' bin wove yit, dat doan' consarn me."

A FAMILY REUNION.

“I THINK, my dear,” said Mrs. Diptera—whose plain, everyday name is Mrs. House Fly—“that it is high time we were having a family reunion. Such things used to be common in our family, but of late we have lost all family pride.”

“Certainly, my love,” said Mr. Fly, who, like most loyal husbands, left the management of social matters entirely to his wife. “If you desire, we’ll set about the enterprise at once. This large kitchen table would be a fine place for a party supper.”

“Yes,” replied his wife, “and the cook has left a lot of cake crumbs and the whole frame of yesterday’s turkey, so there’ll be no trouble at all about the *menu*.” Mrs. Fly had heard that it was quite stylish to use French terms, and she had no idea of being left behind.

Mrs. Fly made out the list of invitations, which her husband duly delivered to their various relations, and at the time appointed they met in Mrs. Beaumont’s kitchen. It was Aunt Mimy’s afternoon out, and, being in something of a hurry, she had forgotten to take away the cake crumbs and turkey frame; so Mrs. Fly was

quite jubilant over the *menu*. Aunt Mimy had also laid a piece of fly paper near by, but Mrs. Fly did not notice that. She had burnished her wings and brushed herself with her delicate antennæ until her husband was quite proud of her.

The first to arrive was Cousin Horsefly,



ly ought to have taken his position as head of the family. He was very handsomely dressed in a coat of blue-black, which had a bloom on it like a plum. His wings were soot black, and the cushions on his feet looked like pretty yellow moccasins. But Mrs. Horsefly, though handsome to look at, is a dangerous foe. She carries neatly folded in her sucker six piercing little lancets, sharp and strong enough to pierce through your boot; but her husband has only four lancets, which he rarely uses, as he lives but a short time and lives mostly upon the dew of flowers. But his wife is a bloodthirsty creature, and when she sticks her six sharp poisonous lancets into old Zampa it is not strange that the poor horse is goaded to desperation. The moth-

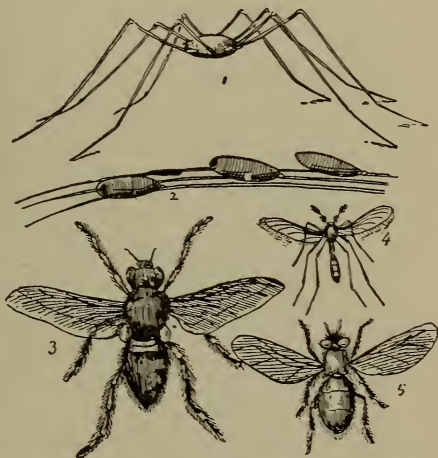
er fly lays her eggs in moist places, but rarely risks laying them in stables.

In striking contrast to Cousin Horsefly came a little dumpling of a creature that Mrs. House Fly treated rather coolly, for she whispered to her husband: "Cousin Cesspool is so low in his origin that really nothing but blood ties would entitle him to appear in genteel society." Cousin Cesspool was an ugly little body, fat and bulky and a little larger than Mrs. House Fly. These little creatures are born near a cesspool, or other impure spots, and by a special provision of Providence they suck up the impure and noxious gases which would otherwise go into the atmosphere and prove deadly to man. And just in company with Cousin Cesspool came another relative, the sewer fly, which lives in sewers, and does for them what the cesspool fly does for other impure places.

A FAMILY REUNION CONCLUDED.

After that the company gathered so thick and fast that Mrs. House Fly had not time to enumerate them. There was old Cousin Blue-

bottle, who buzzes about so officiously and makes herself such a nuisance in the summer time by laying her eggs on every piece of meat that is exposed. Then there came a visitor from the far South who had come up on a prospecting tour and thought seriously of locating in Tennessee. This was the



little, heavy-¹Daddy Longlegs. ²Eggs of Gadfly. ³Botfly.
set, planta-⁴Gnat. ⁵Bluebottle Fly.

tion fly, found in countless numbers in the extreme South. Whenever hominy, grits, or other food made of corn, is left long enough to fer-

ment, this fly appears and lays her eggs in great numbers upon the mass. In a few hours the eggs begin to hatch, and soon the food is fairly alive with little grubs so small that they cannot be seen by the naked eye. By and by they will go into the ground, these larval babies, and when they come out, months afterwards, they will look just like their parents. Being a distinguished visitor from afar, the plantation fly was warmly greeted and treated with the greatest respect by Mrs. House Fly and her other guests.

Everybody laughed when an awkward daddy



AUNT MIMY.

longlegs came bouncing in, and some of the more exclusive said he had no business there, as he was not a member of the fly family at all; but the old gentleman soon convinced them that crane fly was his real name, and that daddy longlegs was only a nick-name

given him by some disrespectful youngsters.

After the party had all assembled and made

quite merry over the cake and turkey frame, they called upon Cousin Horsefly for a speech. He poised himself upon the spout of the coffeepot and began: "My dear relatives, it gives me pleasure to raise my voice on this happy occasion in a tribute to the honored family to which we belong, the ancient and honorable family of flies."

"Hear! hear!" cried a little black gnat who had slipped in and was not quite sure whether she belonged there or not.

"The Diptera," Cousin Horsefly continued, pronouncing the big family name with unction, "may justly be considered the most widely diffused of all animated beings, for they have been found from the heart of the tropics to the most desolate and frozen Arctic shores, and their habits are as varied as the lands where they dwell. Some of our family are strict vegetarians, some of them are carnivorous; but all play a useful part in the economy of nature, and all are undervalued and even despised by our supreme enemy, man, whose warfare upon us never ceases."

"But we pay him back in his own coin," eagerly buzzed the Hessian fly; "I eat up his wheat crops."

"And *my* larval infants destroy his grass lands," broke in daddy longlegs.

"And *we* make the life of his domestic ani-

mals a torture," cried Cousin Horsefly, the gad-fly, the botfly, and the tick all in a chorus.

"And *we* ruin his food and his slumbers, and do our best to show our resentment," said Mr. House Fly, chiming in with the rest.

But his wife frowned at him, and said: "My dear, only pleasant subjects should be discussed at a social gathering, especially at so joyful a time as a family reunion." Then, spying the shining leaf of fly paper, she called the attention of her guests to it, and assured them that it was "a choice confection from dear Paris;" whereupon they all forgot their grievances and fell to with a will.

When Aunt Mimy came in from her visit there was the family reunion all stark and stiff, and as she brushed them into the fire she ejaculated gleefully: "Dat fly paper done got in its work dis time sho!"

A CRUEL WIFE.

THEY were talking about looms and spinners and weavers. Mr. Beaumont had been telling Fletcher how the ladies spun and wove their own dresses during the trying "war times," and Uncle Si and Fletcher continued the discussion as they went out to feed Fletcher's latest pets, a pen of beautiful white rabbits.

"De white ladies sholy did do fine, but I



A CRUEL WIFE.

knows er spinner an' weaver dat kin beat all dat," said the old ducky, with a merry twinkle of his eye.

"You do? Is it old Mrs. Peters, who weaves carpets for mother?"

"No 'n deed, 'taint Mis' Peters, dough she am er pow'ful knowin' han' wid de loom. But de weaver I'm talkin' 'bout furnish 'er own thread, an' what's mo' she tote hit erbout wid 'er all de time."

"Bless me!" cried Fletcher, "I can't imagine who she can be!"

"She spin dat thread an' she weave dat cloth all by her lone se'f. She doan' go to no sheep's back nur no cotton patch nur no silkwurm for de truck to wuk wid, neider. 'An' what's mo', she spin douten enny wheel, an' weave douten enny loom. Now, kin yer guess her name?"

"No, I cannot," said Fletcher, in perplexity.

"Well, den, I'll gin yer ernudder lif! Dis heah weaver am got eight laigs an' eight eyes"—

"Then she's not a woman?" interrupted Fletcher.

"No, not zackly," assented Uncle Si; "but fur all dat, she am er pow'ful housekeeper, an' 'er cubberd ain't skacely ebber empty."

"I know now! I know now!" said Fletcher in triumph. "You mean a spider, for she carries all her materials in her own body, and I read yesterday that she had eight hairy legs and eight beadlike eyes. Mrs. Spider is your weaver."

“Dat am er fack,” said Uncle Si, as he watched the rabbits nibbling the grains of corn. “Jes’ you watch de ol’ lady ez she weave dat web o’ hern t’ go t’ housekeepin’, ur t’ fasten er po’ helpless fly, effen yer wanter see some fine wuk. She kyars her thread in little sacks under her body, an’ hit am ez fine ez silk. When she gits ready t’ fasten up Mr. Fly she hol’ ’im down wid one pair o’ dem hairy laigs o’ hern, an’ wid de rest she win’ in an’ out, in an’ out, wid ’er thread tell she pintedly hab ’im jailed tight and fas’. Den dere she leabs ’im t’ ten’ t’ whatebber *debilment* she hab on han’, and when she gits good ready she gwiner come back an’ suck de life outen ’im. But I ’low de spider am de only wukman dat builds er railroad an’ trabels on hit at de same time. Is yer ebber watched er spider when she wanter tak er little trip go sailin’ out on de silk thread she keep on han’?”

“Yes,” said Fletcher, “and I have seen her do something else not at all kind. I’ve seen her eat her own husband.”

“Yer is?” ejaculated Uncle Si in astonishment. “I knowed de ol’ lady were putty mean, but I didn’t ’low she’d do dat.”

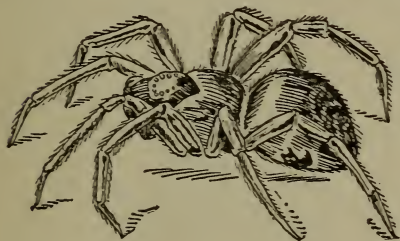
“Yes,” said Fletcher, “the female spider is many times larger than the male, and of course Mr. Spider is pretty badly henpecked. If he doesn’t behave just to suit her, or there does not

happen to be a fly or anything else handy, she'll gobble up the poor fellow in a minute."

"Umph! umph!" grunted Uncle Si, in great disgust, "dat sholy am er scurby trick! An' yit fur all dat dere am some pints 'bout de spider dat er body can't he'p but lak. She am ez neat ez er pin, she am pow'ful industrious an' er good housekeeper. But law! law! dat t'ing o' 'stroy-in' 'er own pardner! Dat dun mak' er body furgit all 'er good pints," and Uncle Si went into the house and left Fletcher to finish feeding the rabbits.

THE TARANTULA.

ONE day a Texas tarantula met a Massachusetts spider who, not being very well that season, had stowed himself in a Pullman sleeper and gone out to Texas to see the country. The spider looked curiously at the tarantula, and the tarantula looked curiously at the spider. Each one was eying a very fat horsefly that had lit on a bit of dry pampas grass near by. At last the tarantula spoke, and she did not speak very gently either. She said: "That's my fly, and



THE TARANTULA.

I'd advise you to let it alone, or you may get into trouble."

"And I say it's *my* fly, and I'll advise *you* to let it alone."

And so, while they disputed over the horsefly, I took out my kodak, and here is the tarantula's picture.

As you will see, she is an ugly creature, hardly worth looking at for her beauty; but, like some people I know, very interesting, with all her ugliness.

She was about two inches long, with her body and legs covered with stubby, bristly brown hairs. The joints of her legs were very bright and transparent, and made me think of thin strips of isinglass as the Texas sunshine fell upon them. "Madam," I said to her, as I saw that the horsefly had sailed away, and thus put an end to the dispute. "I should like extremely to make your acquaintance. I have rarely seen so handsome a spider."

"Spider?" she exclaimed, as she glared at me out of her eight beadlike eyes until I thought they would surely pierce me through. "I hope you don't call *me* a spider!"



SPIDER.

I saw I had "put my foot into it," as the children say, and I hastened to get out as best I might. With my very best bow, I said: "I beg your pardon, madam.

I meant no offense by calling you a spider. The resemblance to one is very striking."

At this the Massachusetts spider came up and took part in the discussion. He was still vexed over losing that horsefly, and he said rather tartly: "She's nothing under the sun but a spider, if she does sail around under a high-flying foreign name. Look at her eight eyes set in double

rows! Look at her long, wiry legs! Look at her hunchback! She has no neck. Neither have I. She's a spider, and a *wolf spider* at that, and that's the most vicious branch of our family. So good day, my *cousin*. I board in that cotton gin yonder. I hope while you're in the neighborhood you'll call around to see your connections."

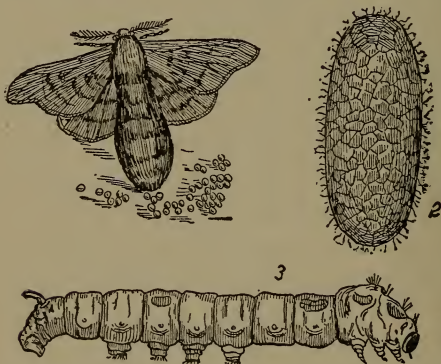
With this parting shot the spider fastened a thread of silk to the lowest limb of a sourwood tree, and was soon spinning his way to the top.

I saw that the spider had left my new friend in a very bad humor, and, having a great desire to study all new and interesting creatures in this wonderful country, I said with my sweetest smile: "Our friend is not a prince in manners, to be sure; but you and I can afford to overlook his rudeness, as it is evidently the result of ignorance. I am really much interested in your family history, and if you will only tell it to me I am sure that you will be able to show me that yonder rude creature is no relation whatever of yours. One can tell by a glance that *you* are a born aristocrat."

This put Mrs. Tarantula in such a fine humor that her eyes glistened with delight. She consented to give me her family history on the spot, and you shall have it just as she told it to me. But you'll have to wait until another time.

A LADY OF QUALITY.

“INDEED, my dears,” said a mother silkworm as she slowly munched a mulberry leaf, “you belong to a very ancient and honorable family, and you have every cause to hold yourself above the common moths that flit about and look more showy than you. Before people ever thought about raising cotton our ancestors were treasured by kings and queens, who delighted to array themselves in gauzy fabrics which they owed to us. The Chinese for a long time were the only



1. Silkworm Moth, Female. 2. Cocoon of Silkworm. 3. Silkworm before Making the Cocoon.

people who knew what a valuable creature a silkworm is, and they tried very hard to keep any one else from finding out their secret; but

by and by a couple of cunning priests went over to China and concealed a lot of silkworm eggs in a hollow bamboo cane. These were brought to Europe, and from them have sprung the thousands of silkworms which have brought so much wealth to the Western world. Ah, my child! we may well be proud of our history, and I hope I shall never again see you flying around with such common, lowborn insects as lightning bugs and bumblebees." So Mrs. Silkworm reached out with her two long horns and drew in a fresh mulberry leaf, on which she contentedly gnawed until it would have seemed that she must be weary.

In spite of her claims to ancient and honorable lineage, she was a homely-looking little body, and no one would have suspected, to look at her, that she was a lady of quality. *Bombyx mori* is her big Latin name, but plain people know her only as Mrs. Silkworm or as the mulberry-feeding moth. She was only about half an inch long, of an ashy-white color, and her husband was not quite so long nor so stout. The baby moth, or grub, is three or four inches long, has no hair upon its ugly body, and seems to have an appetite that is really frightful. By some strange law of its nature these mulberry leaves which the baby silkworm eats are changed within its body into a clear, sticky fluid, which hardens when exposed to the air. When the baby

worm, or larva, gets its growth and is ready to go into the second period of its life, which is called the pupa state, it puts into operation its little spinnerets and spins around itself a thick house, or cocoon. Into this cocoon it puts about four thousand yards of silk thread, which, of course, looks very different from the form in which we get it for use. It takes the little spinner about three days to finish its cocoon, which is white or yellow in color, and is shaped like an egg. If allowed to remain undisturbed, in two or three weeks the insect will loosen one end of its self-made prison, and will come out a perfect moth. This moth will at once find her mate, will lay several hundred eggs, and then her cycle of life is ended, and she dies. But it is before it is ready to come out from its cocoon that man steps in and kills the imprisoned insect, so that the fine silk around it will not be marred or broken. This seems cruel, but it is the only way that the cocoons can be made useful to man.

HOW THE BUTTERFLY CAME.

“It will soon be the season for butterflies,” said Fletcher, as he and the Professor walked through the greening meadow one sunny March day; “and I want you, if you please, sir, to tell me just how butterflies come. I have a general idea about the worm and the chrysalis and all



1. Swallow-Tailed Butterfly. 2. Larva and Chrysalis of Swallow-Tailed Butterfly.

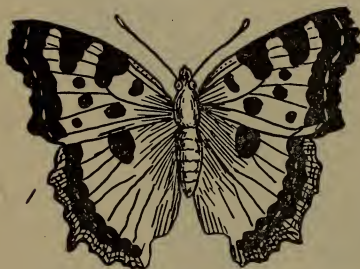
that; but if Uncle Stuart should ask me to give him the history of a butterfly, I should make a poor jumble of it.”

“That is right!” said the Professor with an approving smile; “I like to see you know things definitely, for half knowledge is almost as bad as no knowledge. Well, where shall we begin with our butterfly?”

“Begin at the egg,” said Fletcher.

“When the weather is warm the butterfly lays her eggs, usually several hundred of them, and in a few days they are hatched.”

“Not into butterflies?” queried Fletcher.



1. Large Tortoise-Shell Butterfly.

2. Chrysalis and Larva of Large Tortoise-Shell Butterfly.

“No, indeed; not into butterflies, but into little ugly black caterpillars with a few stripes of white around them. They are less than a tenth of an inch long, and look as little like our gorgeous butterfly as one can well imagine. These caterpillars eat and grow and

eat until they have outgrown four different suits

of clothes. The last is the bright-green caterpillar with which you are so familiar."

"He is the fellow that ate up so many of my plants last year," said Fletcher.

"The very same, no doubt. But their eating days do not last long; when the caterpillar gets its full growth it loses its appetite and goes off to some tree or bush. It is getting ready for another change, or metamorphosis, in its peculiar existence. Each caterpillar has within its body two small sacks filled with a sticky fluid, with which they weave a network and fasten themselves to a leaf or some secure place."

"I've seen those funny-looking balls, tied with silky webs like a spider weaves," said Fletcher with delight.

"Yes; and when the caterpillar has fastened himself in his little tent his green skin falls off, and he lies there apparently lifeless all through the long, dreary winter."

"And then?" asked Fletcher.

"And then," said the Professor, "when the skies have grown balmy, when buds and blossoms are ready for the butterfly's kisses, there is a stir in the shriveled case, and lo! instead of the crawling worm the soaring butterfly appears—not so strong and bright and beautiful as it will be when the sunshine has warmed it, but still a butterfly, with its coat of many colors and

its free, glad wings. Are we not like butterflies? Here we toil and struggle in our chrysalis state; but when we have fulfilled God's uses in this humble sphere we shall rise on free wings and soar far above this poor earth of ours. The thought is beautiful and full of comfort," said the Professor as their walk ended at Mr. Beaumont's front door.

THE SWARMING OF THE BEES.

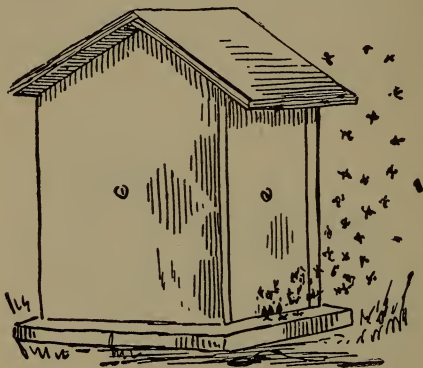
“TING a ling! ting a ling!” went the bell wielded by Uncle Si, who brandished it frantically as he cried aloud: “De bees is gwine t’ swahm! De bees is gwine t’ swahm! Git de new hive quick!”



SWARM OF BEES, SETTLED.

Uncle Si's racket soon brought out Mr. Beaumont, Fletcher, and the Professor, who thought perhaps the house was on fire.

“I’s e been er watchin’ dem bees all day,” said Uncle Si, “an’ I knowed fum dere cantankera-tions dey fixin’ t’ git ready t’ swahm. Mas’ Beaumont, effen yer’ll jes’ keep dis bell er gwine libely; an’ little mas’, effen yer’ll git dat kiverlid offen my baid an’ he’p de Puffesser spread hit



BEEHIVE.

under dis heah tree, I’ll git de saw an’ ’ll hab dat lim’ off presen’ly.”

Like a general marshaling his cohorts, Uncle Si gave these directions, to which they all rendered smiling obedience. The bees had collected in a swarming, working brown mass on the limb of an immense maple tree, under which the Professor obediently spread the “kiverlid.” Uncle Si, all unmindful of his “rheumatiz,” mounted, saw in hand, to the limb, sawed it off,

and allowed it to drop gently to the ground. In the meantime Mr. Beaumont had brought a nice, new hive in which some honeycomb had been placed. When the bees smelled this honeycomb they began moving into the new hive like an army with marching orders.

“What is that long-bodied bee with the short wings at the head of the procession?” asked Fletcher, as with almost breathless anxiety they all sat watching the bees.

“That is the queen bee,” answered his father, who was quite an expert in bee culture.

“What does she do, father?”

“Well, in addition to ruling the colony, she lays all the eggs in the cells which the working bees prepare to receive them. The queen, you see, is mother as well as queen of the entire tribe.”

“But I see only one queen. Why don’t they have several? She would help to lay the eggs,” continued Fletcher.



1. Queen Bee. 2. Worker. 3. Drone.

“Ah,” said Mr. Beaumont; “our queen bee is

no exception to other monarchs. She is full of jealousy and pride; and if more than one queen appears in a hive, the ruling queen will either drive her away or sting her to death.

“But I see some dull, heavy-bodied bees creeping around. They are larger than most of the bees, but their bodies are not so long as the queen’s. What are they?”

“These are the drones, or father bees, who seem to be held in the greatest contempt by those little brown fellows who are so numerous. The smaller bees are the workers, and, as in our world, they are the ones on whom all the rest depend for sustenance. The poor drones are really not to blame for not gathering honey, as God has made them that way and they really cannot share the burdens of the workers. But they are driven out and left to starve; and if a drone braver than the rest tries to return to the hive, he is stung to death by the workers.”

“Poor drones!” said Fletcher. “I am glad people are not like bees, for in our world I don’t think any one need be a drone unless he has a mind to.”

THE BUMBLEBEE.

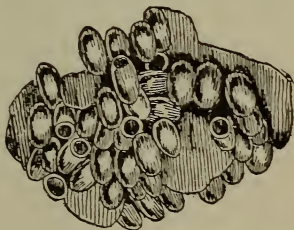
“YER bettah stir yo’ stumps, ol’ man, kase yer ain’ gwin t’ be heah much longer,” said Uncle Si one crisp October morning as a handsome bumblebee buzzed past him to light on a clover blossom near by.

“Why not, Uncle Si?” queried Fletcher, who was poising himself on the end of a fence rail in front of Uncle Si’s cabin.

“‘Why not,’ honey? Kase he gwin t’ han’ in his checks jes’ ez soon ez de col’ wedder come erlong.”

“Don’t bumblebees live through the winter, Uncle Si? Do the poor things all die out in cold weather?” asked Fletcher with genuine concern.

“Yes, honey, de men folks all dies, an’ dem udders what de Puffesser call



‘neuters.’ Dey ain’ neidermen nur wimmen, but dey goes erlong an’ does de wuk an’ let’s de queen boss ’em. But yer bettah ax de Puffesserll ’bout ’em, kase I mout git yer twisted up an’ tell yer wrong, an’ de Puffes-

ser ud hatter git de kinks ouden yer haid at las'. So jes' g'long t' him now, an' I'll dig dese sweet taters, kase it feel lak dere mout be fros' t'-night."

"So you want me to tell you about bumblebees, do you?" asked the Professor when Fletcher applied to him.

"Yes, sir. Tell me first, Are humblebees and bumblebees the same?"

"Just the same, and in Germany they are called 'hummel.' I think it must be owing to the humming, buzzing noise made by these insects. They belong to the family Apidæ, of which our little honeybee is the most common type. Really, although the hive bee and the bumblebee look quite different, in all the main points they are alike. They live in colonies, as the honeybee does; they



BUMBLEBEE'S NEST OF MOSS.

have workers (called neuters) and males. But, instead of each colony having a single queen, as is the case in the honeybee government, many bumblebee queens are found in the same nest."

“But Uncle Si says none of them but the queens live through the winter. That’s hard on the rest.”

“Yes, looking at it from our own standpoint, nature is often hard on the weak. The male bumblebees die in winter, and also the neuters. So in the spring the queen bumblebee is soon on the wing, and the first eggs she lays are hatched into neuters. These are the working bees. They gather honey and are faithful servants in rearing the young bees.”

“Where do bumblebees make their nests?” asked Fletcher. “I never saw one, although I have heard boys say there was fine fun in ‘cleaning up’ a nest of bumblebees.”

“You’ll find their nests under bushes, in banks, etc. At first the nest is small, with oval brownish cells, but it is enlarged from time to time as the colony increases, until sometimes three or four hundred bees are found in one nest.”

THE BLUE JAY.

THE Professor was sick, and for the week past Little Boy's lessons in natural history had been suspended. But he and Uncle Si had wonderful conferences as the old darky went about his work; and I'm prone to believe that Little Boy had learned more about birds and animals from Uncle Si's homely talks than from the prosy Professor.



BLUE JAY.

One Sunday evening as the old negro sat tilted back against the chimney dozing in the sun Little Boy scrambled into his lap and gave him a vigorous shake. "There, now, Uncle Si, you've

got to wake up! I've let you sleep a whole hour, and now I'm lonesome."

The old darky opened his eyes, stretched himself, and yawned, saying: "Law, law, little mars! how you does harass dis po' ol' niggah! What yer wantin' dis time?"

"I want you to tell me some about birds. Not old dry book-birds like the Professor's, but the nice funny sort that you know about."

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the old man, pleased at the implied compliment, "dis heah am Sunday; 'tain't no time ter be projickin' wid birds."

"O, pshaw!" said the little boy, "they are God's birds, and it's not a bit of harm to talk about them on Sunday. Mamma says so. Go 'long, Uncle Si."

The story-teller hesitated, for Uncle Si was sexton of the 'meetinghouse' and a very pious old darky. But he finally said: "Well, chile, what I gwine to tell 'bout? I done tole 'bout de red-headed woodpecker an' de lonesome hoot owl, an' lots o' beastes. What yer wan' 'er heah?"

Just then a large bird sailed overhead and began its shrill call to its mate: "Jay! jay!"

"Yes, that's it!" cried Little Boy, clapping his hands. "Tell about the blue jay."

"Well, honey, dere's a mighty heap ter tell

'bout dat blue jay; but hit am mostly baid. He seems ter think when he perch on de lim' an' cock hes head ter one side, jes' t' show off dat topknot, dat kase he so big an' got er new blue coat on wid er white shutbosom an' er black neckercher, dat folks gwine t' put up wid whatsomeber capers he min' t' cut. I done heah de Puffesser say dat de blue jay am er'Merican bird intirely, an' dat he's kinfolks t' de crow. I spec' dat what make him so thievish, fur de crow am' de mos' thievishes' bird what libs. Stid o'tend-in' t' hes own bizness, he all de time gwine roun' suckin' aigs fur udder birds an' in all sorts o' debilment. Long time ergo dere was er blue jay what kep' tarrifyin' de birds in ol' Mas' yahd tel I jes pintedly coulden' stan' it. So I sez: 'Nebber min', young man! I'll fix yer.' So I fix up er mighty fine nes' in er martin box what de birds done forsook, an' I gits me fo' nice patridge aigs, an' when I lets out a litl' o' de inside wid er pin I puts pizen in 'em all, an' lay 'em back keerful in de nes'. De nex' mawnin' Mas' Blue Jay come prowlin' 'roun', an' he lite in an' suck 'em ebery one."

"Did it kill 'im, Uncle Si?" asked Little Boy.

"Kill 'im? Why, chile, he start t' fly 'way, when all uv er suddent he wheel erroun' an' flop down right at my feet, too ded t' skin!"

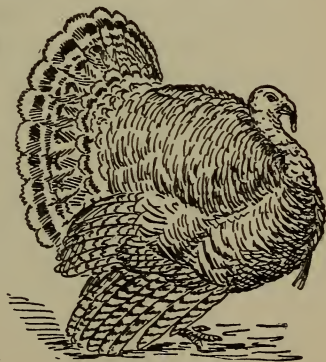
THE TURKEY.

UNCLE SI was laid up with the “rheumatiz,” and that fact seemed to cast a shade over the Christmas jollifications at Dawn Crest, Mr. Beaumont’s home. The old darky was always general fireman at Christmastide, and at that festive season it seemed that he could carry hickory logs which at any other time would have staggered him. He always said that when he got Christmas in his bones it “kinder spry de ol’ nigger up.”

About noon on Christmas day Uncle Si lay in his bed groaning ruefully, when Fletcher entered the cabin carrying a silver tray covered with a snowy napkin. “Uncle Si, I believe you said you didn’t like *turkey*. I am afraid there was no use in my bringing you any.”

“Now, chile, yer better gway fum heah wid yo’ foolishness;

yer know berry well I ain’ nebber said nuffin’ o’



THE TURKEY.

de kin'. I is said dat I wouldn' swap off er good fat possum fer no tukkey, but dat ain' sayin' nuffin' 'gin de tukkey when dere ain' no possum in de case. So yer mout ez well onkiver dat waiter," which Fletcher accordingly did, and Uncle Si forgot his "rheumatiz" as the odor of the turkey and celery and cranberry sauce ascended his nostrils.

"Did you know that all the *first* turkeys came from America, Uncle Si?"

"No, chile, I kant jes' zackly say ez I did. Howsomeebber, I mout er knowed hit, kase mos' ob de good t'ings staht in dis kentry. Dere's one t'ing I'd lak ter know—is tukkeys what yer eat named atter dat kentry what I heah yer readin' 'bout?"

"No, Uncle Si; it is thought that people called them turkeys because the sound they make is rather like the word 'turk,' 'turk,' 'turk.' Were there many wild turkeys here when you can first remember, Uncle Si?"

"Yes 'ndeed, chile. I 'members how dem fine young gentermuns fum Richmon' use ter come out t' weun's plantation t' kill wil' ducks an' geeses an' tukkeys; an' dey'd kyar home dead loads ob 'em. But dey's mos'ly all kilt up now."

"Yes. I never saw but one wild turkey in my life; but all the turkeys were once wild, un-

til they were what we call 'domesticated.' One funny thing I saw in my natural history is that when this country was all wild and new the people over in the old countries called guinea fowls 'turkeys.' I don't see how they could make that mistake, for I do not think they are at all alike. What kind of turkeys do you like best, Uncle Si?"

"Law, chile, I doan kyer, so's dey's fat an' has plenty o' stuffin'. Dem big white tukkeys is pow'rful fine, an' dem yaller buff 'uns is hard t' beat, an' when yer see one o' dem bronge gobblers spraid hes tail and strut jes' fo' Christmas yer'll say he am de boss. De good Lawd he done make all sawts o' folks, an' he done make all sawts o' beastes so's ebberbody kin be suited. But I will say when Sist' Mimy wuk on 'im, enny kin' o' tukkey's good 'nuff fer po' folks—an' I sholy am much erbleeged t' yer, little mas'er, fer dat fine dinner—'pears lak hit kinder driv de rheumatiz 'way. An' tell ol' Miss effen she'll sen' dat boneset tea down ter-night I sholy will tak hit, an' thanky too."

THE WREN.

“PEAH’s lak dat ol’ wren ain’t nebber gwine hatch out dem aigs,” said Uncle Si as the mother bird flew off the nest, hidden away under the eaves of his low thatched cabin. The old darky eased himself up on his shuck-bottom chair and



THE WREN.

peeped cautiously into the nest, but was careful not to touch it, for he knew that most birds will leave their nest if they detect the smell of man’s hand upon it.

“De wren am a curus bird,” mused Uncle Si. “Now what use dat litl’ tinesy creetur got fur dat great big nes’, an’ what fur make ’er buil’ anudder nes’ so close t’ hern? I nebber is jes’

zackly und'stood why yer allus fin' a empty nes' clost t' whah de ol' wren keepin' house. Sum folks say dey's 'cocks' nestes', but I'se 'zamined clost, an' I ain't nebber seed no he wrens in 'em yit. Howsomebber, I lubs de wren; hit am sech a fren'ly littl' pussun, an' allus peahs lak hit's got so much bizness ter look atter. Dat 'minds me—I'd bettah be buggin' dem taters, stid o' standin' heah pryin' inter birds' nestes jes' lak any boy," and Uncle Si began to whistle "The Old-Time Religion" as he went contentedly off to fight the enemies of his potato crop.

Soon after, Fletcher and the Professor came along. It was vacation time, so Fletcher had no regular lessons, but he and the Professor walked about, studying Nature in her varying moods. Not seeing Uncle Si, they sat down on the porch to rest, and kept very still until the mother wren flew back upon her nest. But her mate perched near, as if to say: "If there is any trouble to come, I am the one to do the fighting."

"What bird is that?" asked Fletcher. "Just look at its funny little short wings and its straight-up tail! It looks like a sparrow."

"That," said the Professor, putting on his glasses, for he was very near-sighted, "that is the house wren."

"Is it a good bird?" asked Fletcher.

"I can hardly call it good," answered the

Professor, "although it has a sweet, cheerful song and is very friendly. But the male is bold and something of a robber."

"A robber?" exclaimed Fletcher with new interest, for he doted on robbers.

"Yes; it will often drive other birds from their nests and take possession of them. I have seen it attack a cat, when it came too near the nest of its mate."

"Do wrens love worms?" asked Fletcher as the male bird flew by with a wriggling earth-worm in its mouth.

"Yes, indeed," said the Professor; "they love all kinds of worms and insects, and do much good to our gardens by destroying them."

"Are there any other sort of wrens?"

"Yes; there are many varieties of wrens, with differing habits. The house wren does not stay with us during the winter, but the golden-crested wren and the winter wren are not afraid of snow and ice. I have seen great numbers of them in the coldest countries where I have traveled; and I remember a fine wren pie which I ate for Christmas dinner on the very top of the Alps. Some other time I will tell you about the long-billed and the short-billed marsh wren, with its back streaked lengthwise. I see Uncle Si coming now, so we will deliver your father's message and be going."

THE WHIPPOORWILL.

TWILIGHT was beginning to fall around Uncle Si's cabin; the chickens were going to roost in the trees behind the house, and the bullfrogs in the ponds were chanting their harsh "jug-er-rums" to their mates.

Uncle Si sat on the doorstep trying by the uncertain light to finish a shuck mat on which he was working: "Bekase hit am a pity ter spile ernudder day wid de tail eend ob er job."



THE WHIPPOORWILL.

Fletcher sat cross-legged on a bench near by, watching him work.

The old man was muttering, half to himself, half to the boy: "Yes, dat were er scurby trick

in sumbody t' pitch pizen meat t' my dawg. I wouldn' taken five dollahs fur Bounce. 'Peahs lak one ob de fambly's done kilt," and a tear trickled down on the shucks in Uncle Si's lap. "Effen I jes' could fin' who done hit, I'd"—

The old man broke off suddenly and a startled look came into his face as a clear, piping note from out the currant bushes called: "Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!"

Uncle Si began to whisper: "De Lawd am my shepherd," in such an awe-struck voice that Fletcher thought the old darky had surely seen a ghost or goblin. "What's the matter, Uncle Si?" he questioned. "You were just about to say what you would do if you could catch the one that poisoned Bounce."

"Sh—; doan yer pay no 'tention t' dat, honey; dis ol' niggah's kinder offen his kerzip t'-day, else he'd er nebber been er harbrin' dem weeked t'oughts! Doan yer heah dat whipperwill? Now, effen yer's got enny onkin' thoughts in yer min' dribe 'em out quick. Effen yer doan, dey gwine stay dere er yeah fum de time yer heah dat fus' whipperwill, an' tohment yo' ter def. I alluz tries t' hab good thawts when dat bird am erroun'."

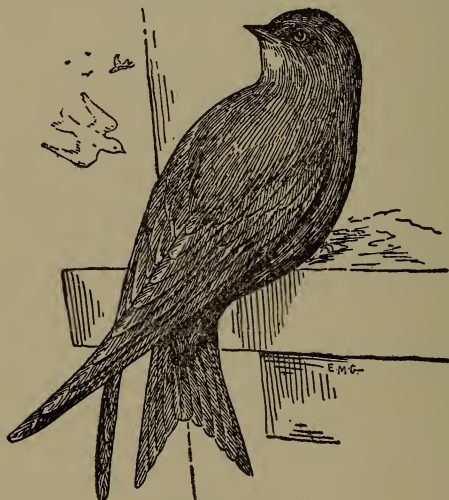
"What does a whippoorwill look like, Uncle Si? I never did see one in daylight."

"Yer ain't nebber gwine t', nuther, ef he can

hep it, 'kase he hide out in de daytime, an' ten t' hes bizness uv er night. What do he look lak? Well, he am brownish an' reddish an' grayish an' blackish, all streakedy up tergedder lak' scrambled aigs, teched up wid er littl' white collar roun' hes neck. He am erbout so long"—measuring about ten inches on a strip of shuck. "De whipperwill am def on bugs; an' when he go scootin' erlong close t' de groun' sort o' side swipin', I tell yer man, dem gnats an' sech better lite out! Did yer know dat sum folksees say de whipperwill suck de goat; an' quiensecontly one ob his names am goatsucker. But I done ax de Puffesser 'bout dat, an' he say dey doan' do no sech er ting. I low dat's one o' Mas' Jay Bird's lies. Now, den, I'se done dis mat, an' yer'd better run erlong home, lessen yo' maw'll be oneasy 'bout yer."

THE MARTIN.

“JES’ lissen, will yer?” said Uncle Si as Fletcher paused in his walk to see the cause of the lively chatter which he heard in the new martin boxes he and Uncle Si had put up a few days before; “dere’s dem debittable bluebirds tryin’ t’ whup de mahtins outen de boxes, an’ I



THE MARTIN.

’low dey shan’t do no sich er t’ing; dey druv ’em out las’ year, an’ time erbout am fair play.” So, by the vigorous use of chunks and sticks and yet

more vigorous "shooing" Uncle Si succeeded in putting the bluebirds to flight and leaving the martins masters of the situation.

Thus left undisturbed by their ancient enemy, the martins flew in and out of their boxes with merry song and chatter. One particularly handsome pair attracted Fletcher's attention, and he watched them with the greatest delight.

The male was of a dark bluish, glossy purple, but his wings and forked tail were brownish black. The female was of a duller color, and not so handsome. As they flitted here and there hunting for bits of straw and grass for the nest, Uncle Si leaned upon his hoe handle and said: "Dere aint anudder bird, not eben ouh pij-gens, dat I is mo' fonder ob den de mahtins. Peahs lak dey's sorter human ennyhow. Stid o' rangin' way off somers, he ain't nebber happy less he buil' hes nes' close t' whah folkses libs. But de mahtin ain de leas' bit uppitty in hes notions. Dat yeah when we all wuz in too big er hurry t' buil' de boxes dey settled down jes' ez peacerble ez could be in dem gouhds what we hung in de trees, and raise jes' ez decent er fambly ez ebber uz fotch up in de fines' mahtin box. Dey peahs t' lub erbody fuh dey self an' not fur what dey kin git outen 'em lak lots o' folkses."

"Do you know what family of birds the martin belongs to, Uncle Si?"

“Law no, chile, I cain’t be eberlastin ’zarnin inter de fambly ob all de birds an’ beastes in creation lak yo’sef and de Puffesser do. Hit’s all I kin do t’ became acquainted wid deysefs, let erlone all dere fambly. But I ’low in case de mahtin b’longs t’ de mahtin fambly, jes’ lak de Beaumonts b’longs t’ de Beaumont fambly.”

“No, Uncle Si; the martin belongs to the *Swallow* family, or as some people call them the *Swifts*.”

“Dat sho’ am er good name, ’case dem mahtins pintedly kin scoot when dey staht. An’ dey ain’ no lazy birds nudder, de berry fus’ t’ing I heah in de mawnin’, atter dat ol’ rooster crow, am de mahtins chattin t’ one anudder—dey keeps hit up ontel all de lazy folkses done had er chance t’ git waked up. Many’s de time my mammy’s shuck me an’ said: ‘Git up, yer lazy nigger! doan’ yer heah dem mahtins callin’ yer?’”

“Our bird is called the purple martin,” said Fletcher, “but there are many others—there are some sort or other in all countries nearly, but they are not always called by the same name. They don’t stay in the same place all the year; don’t you remember what kind of bird it is that lives in one country in winter and another in summer?”

The old darky scratched his head in perplexity a moment; and then said: “Now, littl’ Mas’, yer knows berry well dem big names won’t stick in dis ol’ nigger’s haid! Peah’s lak de Puffesser

doan' put ernuff gum stickum on 'em. Seems t' me dem trabberlin' birds hab some sort o' 'tory' t' 'em, but jes' what sort o' tory hit wer' hit ud put me t' my stumps t' tell."

"Maybe it was *migratory*, Uncle Si," suggested Fletcher, who dearly loved to get a joke on the old negro.

"Dat's jes' de berry *tory*, littl' mas'; I members hit now, *migertory*, dat's de birds dat hatter spen' dere wintahs in one place an' dere summahs in anudder. Dey's pow'ful qualitifed birds, dey is. But fur all dat dey ain' erbove eatin' all sawts o' bugs, an' fur dat reasin I lak t' hab de mahtins erroun'; hit am er gret hep in de gyardin'. Mor'ober, when yer hab er lot er mahtins 'bout, dey gwine 'r mak' hit libely fur de hawks an' de crows, which am sho'ly pests. Ez dey raises two broods in one seazin, an' ez de ol' lady feels lak she ain doin' no good douten she lays six aigs befo' she 'gins t' set, she gits up er putty good fambly befo' de summah's ober. Is dem udder mahtins lak dis un in buildin' dere nes'es clost t' folkses houses?"

"Not all of them. There is a sand martin that is very different from our house martin. It is smaller, is mouse-colored, and builds its nest in the side of a cliff. But you and I will not get these flowers planted if we stand here all day and talk about martins."

THE ROBIN.



THE ROBIN.

THESE birds belong to the class of "early birds" that are supposed to "catch the worm."

A certain lazy little girl remembers that when her father used to call, "Don't you hear the robin?" she would think with satisfaction that breakfast was far off, and would settle down for another nap.

There are two kinds of birds called robin, but one of them is known as the redbreast, and is quite different from the large American robin. Robin redbreast is a great favorite in Great Britain and Canada, and is often seen in the United States. It is smaller in size than the regular robin, and has a bright reddish-orange breast. These lively birds frequently stay with us all winter, and the children delight to repay its cheery songs with a shower of crumbs.

The American robin is nearly twice as large as robin redbreast. The top of its body is olive gray, the underpart brown, the sides of the head

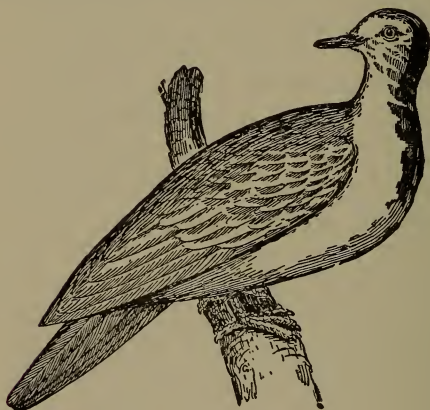
black with a white chin and throat. By nature it is a migratory bird; but in sheltered places it is found all winter, even in the North, while it rarely leaves the South for a warmer climate. It raises two broods a year. Sometimes it is tamed and caged, but it is usually left to enjoy its wild freedom. In some places robins are thought to be quite a delicacy for the table, and in the South, where they are plentiful, the market is sometimes glutted with them.

The robin is a great insect-destroyer, but is by no means conscientious about stealing our small fruit. The race for the cherries is often a lively one between the small boy and the robin, with Sir Robin frequently ahead.

THE DOVE.

Emblem thou of peace and love,
Bird of heaven, thou gentle dove.

“WHAT do you know about the dove?” I questioned of a bevy of young people who were airing their attainments in natural history.



THE DOVE.

“The dove? Why, it is the bird that Noah sent out of the ark.”

And I dare say that this is the fact which most of us recall when this gentle bird is presented to our minds.

Will it rob the dove of its time-honored halo if I tell you that it is, in exact language, a pi-

geon? in other words, that it belongs to the class of birds—*Columbæ*—all of which ornithologists treat as pigeons?

Who can forget that immortal picture that stands before us in living colors when we read of the Spirit descending like a dove and lighting upon him? For evermore must we feel that we have the divine sanction for regarding the dove as a type and symbol of purity and love.

The turtle dove is the one which is most familiar and is the most tenderly loved in America. It is found also in Great Britain and Europe, but is less common than other varieties of which we shall presently speak. Being a migratory bird, it can rarely endure the rigors of our winter; but in mild seasons I have frequently heard its familiar “coo” long after Christmastide. Their meat is dark, but very palatable, and hunters delight to “bring them down” during the winter season. Often have I listened to the plaintive cry of a love-lorn turtledove whose mate has been ruthlessly slain by some unfeeling Nimrod, and such “sport” has always seemed to me like the “murder of the innocents.”

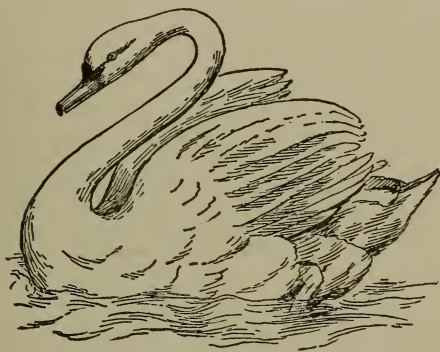
The most common European dove is the ring-dove, or wood pigeon. This bird is found in vast numbers on the beautiful estates in England, and has come to be regarded as a pest by the farmers on account of its depredations upon

vegetation. As it raises several broods during the season, its increase is very rapid. This bird is larger than other doves, and is easily recognized by the white spot on either side of its neck, which forms an almost continuous "ring," whence its name. For a nest it places a slight platform of sticks on the bough of a tree, and lays thereon two eggs, which, as is the case with all doves, are white.

The stockdove is smaller and darker colored than the ringdove, and breeds not in a nest on the bough, but loves to occupy rabbit burrows, or holes in the trunk of a tree. It is much less common than the ringdove, but is similar to it in habits. Another variety is the rockdove, which is lighter colored than the last mentioned, and has its wings barred with white. It haunts the rocky coasts of Europe, and is rarely seen inland. Ornithologists claim that this is the parent stock of our domestic pigeons. There are other interesting varieties, such as the Barbary or collared dove, which is sometimes seen in cages, and others, but space forbids their mention.

THE SWAN.

“As graceful as a swan” is an expression we have all heard, and one who has watched these beautiful aquatic fowls as they glide with such easy grace upon the shining water will never wonder why “the grace of the swan” has passed



THE SWAN.

into a truism. The swan belongs to the family called *Cygnus*, and seems to be halfway between the duck and the goose. Its plumage is so soft, thick, and beautiful that a very fine sort of goods made of wool, silk, and cotton is known as “swan’s-down.”

Swans are not hard to tame; and one sees them in a half-domesticated state in many places, both in Europe and the United States. Although

naturally migratory in habit, they become as tame as ducks and geese under kind treatment, and seem to overcome their wild nature, which would prompt them to fly away to a warm climate in the fall and to return in the spring to the cooler climates to rear their young. Doubtless many of our readers have seen the swans in the various public gardens, and have enjoyed scattering crumbs for them. Those who have done this will not need that I should tell them how a grown up swan looks. Its long, graceful neck, its snowy plumage, its red bill, its air of dignity and pride will never be forgotten by one who has seen them. But this swan, which is the one usually seen, is not white at first. Its first feathers are a dark, sooty brown, and the young birds are about a year old before they come out in their snowy plumage.

There are two kinds of white swan. The one we usually see is mute, and does not seem to attempt any sort of musical sound. This swan has a red bill, while the other white swan is called the whistling swan or the whooper, and its bill is yellow. There is a belief among many people, and we often hear this belief expressed in poetry, that this whistling swan sings its most beautiful song when it is dying. We have all heard of "the last notes of the dying swan," but many prosaic people say that this is just a

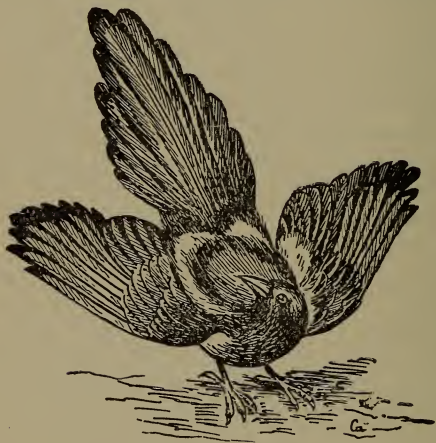
beautiful story told by poets and other imaginative people.

This whistling swan is a native of Iceland, Russia, and other cold countries, and comes southward only when driven by the cold winters of his native land. But we have also a swan akin to the whistling swan in America, only we call it the trumpeter. Our swans are larger than those seen in Europe, even when they seem to belong to the same family.

For a long time nobody had ever seen a black swan; but in 1697 some Dutch navigators discovered black swans in Australia, where they were found to be quite abundant. However, so great a curiosity could not be spared, and black swans, in a captive state, may be found all over the world.

THE MAGPIE.

WHEN mother says, "Baby is a perfect magpie," she means that he is just such a bundle of meddling and mischief that he is always out of one trick into another. And this fondness of pilfering and mischief have wrought such prejudice against the magpie that in Great Britain, where it was once a favorite, it is almost exter-



THE MAGPIE.

minated. It has a strange fondness for pilfering and hiding away any bright, shining object; and many stories are told of jewels, etc., which have been stolen by these birds. This propensity has,

no doubt, caused many unjust suspicions to be cast upon the magpie, which does not appear to be so bad a bird as is supposed.

It is a member of the crow family, and, in a state of freedom, is a beautiful and attractive bird, with its glossy black plumage and its long tail brilliant with glintings of purple, green, and bronze. After mating, the pairs continue together all the year, living chiefly on small animals. When not molested, this is a friendly bird and fond of the society of man. Their lively chatter and power to imitate words causes very talkative people to be sometimes called "magpies," especially when their talk has more sound than sense.

It is said that even in Lapland the magpie is found pushing its way from one station to another as fast as the country is settled. Superstitious people regard it as "bad luck" when magpies present themselves, and the sight of a single "pie" is considered a sure forerunner of sorrow.

GROSBEAKS.

FLETCHER had been reading James Lane Allen's charming book, "The Kentucky Cardinal," and the grosbeaks were occupying his attention. The redbird was an old friend of his; but he knew it only as the redbird, and it seemed strange to hear it called the Cardinal Grosbeak.

"I never heard of calling a redbird a grosbeak," he complained to his father. "They've gotten to putting all sorts of fancy names to everyday things till I don't know what to call anything. Now whoever heard of calling a plain redbird a grosbeak?"

"If you would just think a moment, and brush up your French a bit, you would have no trouble with grosbeak. You put that prefix before words every day of your life, and never think you are doing a very difficult thing. We put another *s* to the French word, and use it almost every day. Only yesterday I heard you tell Aunt Mimy that she was getting real 'gross-looking.' You meant she was looking small and delicate, didn't you?"

"Why, father, how ridiculous! You know I meant she was big and coarse-looking."

"Well, then, what's a grosbeak?" asked Mr. Beaumont with a smile.

“Why, father, how stupid I am!” exclaimed Fletcher, the light breaking over his face. “A grosbeak is bound to be a bird with a big strong bill, and that is just what the redbird has.”

Just then a beautiful bird alighted upon the cedar tree in front of the house, and uttered a loud whistling note as if to say: “You are talk-



THE GROSBEAK.

ing about me, and here I am; now admire me all you wish.”

And indeed that was an easy thing to do, for, from his crimson breast to the jaunty crest upon his head, he was a very coxcomb among birds. The shading of black about him was just suffi-

cient to bring out the brilliance of his plumage. His beak was large and sharp and strong, as well it might be, for he used it in cracking cherry stones, the cones of pine, and other hard substances upon which he lived. He has almost as many relations as the Smith family, and so different from himself and from each other that it is hard to realize their kinship. Indeed, if a whole bevy of sparrows, and hawfinches, and others of the family had collected in Fletcher's trees and begun to call each other "cousin," I think he would have thought they were only joking. But if he had looked at their bills, he would have found that they were really akin; for all these birds have very strong bills and can manage with ease the hard seeds, etc., which they delight to eat. Really they all belong to the great big family of *Fringillidæ*, or finches; and then, again, they are divided up into a great many subfamilies. But Southern children love the redbird best of all the grosbeaks, not only for his beautiful clothes—and who of us does not love beauty?—but also for his cheerful, happy disposition. Did you never sit looking listlessly out upon the snow-draped landscape and wonder if in all the snowy waste one speck of spring-time brightness could be seen? Then from out the depths of the laden cedars you have heard a low crooning call, gradually growing bolder

until such a burst of gladness vibrated in the wintry air that all the sweet voices of spring seemed to awake. And when the song was ended, like a bit of glowing flame the redbird flitted out and the world was like a new place to you.

THE QUAIL.

WHEN we speak of the quail we usually think of the partridge, or bobwhite, whose merry whistling call most of us have heard from infancy. But, while the partridge is a sort of quail, the quail is not a partridge. The quail never perches on trees, as the partridge does,



THE QUAIL.

but always lights upon the ground. The quail excels the partridge in power of flight. It has longer wings and a shorter bill, has no red space

above the eyes, and no spur. The quail is found almost over the entire world, while the partridge is an American bird. The quail has reddish-brown feathers; and each feather is patched with darker brown, the cock being much brighter and handsomer than the hen. Like the partridge, the quail breeds upon the ground. Though a migratory bird, it often passes the winter in the United States and even Great Britain. America has fifty or sixty varieties of birds called quail, but the best known is our partridge, or bobwhite. Our partridge has been often taken to England; but it never thrived there, nor does the English quail do well in America.

It is a strange fact that quails were never found among the Indians in the early days of this country; but whenever the white men came, quails swarmed about their camp as they did about the camp of the children of Israel. It is said that when an Indian found a quail they would all lament and cry, "The white man is coming, and we must give up our homes," and so it always proved.

THE PARROT.

ONE day, as Uncle Si entered his cabin after rather a tiresome forenoon's work, some one under his bed cried angrily: "Get out! get out!" Whereat Uncle Si grew very angry and, gathering the broom, made a furious lunge at the intruder under his bed.

"Git out yo'sef, sah, effen yer wan' ennybody t' git out. Hit's er putty pass w'en er decent Chu'ch member hatter be ordered outen he's own house by some unbeknownst whipper snapper. Git out, I say, effen yer doan' wan' t' be druv out. Sick 'im, Trip," continued the old darky, when the intruder, all undaunted by the broom, failed to budge. Just then from under the bed came another fierce "Get out!" followed by a suspicious snicker. Uncle Si gave a grunt, got down on his knees, peeped under the bed, and got up again exclaiming: "'Pon my wo'd an' honnah, I bleeb hit's de Ol' Boy! Sick 'im, Trip!" But Trip refused to "sick 'im."

Uncle Si took his ancient flintlock from the wall, saying: "I 'low w'en I draw a bead on yer wid dis weepun o' mine yer'll come out frum dere!" and Uncle Si would have fired if a laughing voice had not called out: "Don't shoot, Un-

cle Si, don't shoot; I've got something to show you," and Fletcher crawled out from under the bed, with something bright in his arms.

Uncle Si held up his hands in horror. "Law, chile, yer hadn't orter play sich pranks. Yer mout er been kilt! Effen I'd er lammed erway at yer, dere ain' no tellin' de damage I mout er done."

But Fletcher only laughed, for he thought he



THE PARROT.

had very little to fear from Uncle Si's marksman-ship.

"Why, Uncle Si, I came in to show you my beautiful birthday present. Tony just brought it from the express office. How do you like its voice?" and Fletcher held up a beautiful green parrot for Uncle Si's inspection.

"I haint nuffin' tall ergin he's woice, littl' mas'; but de langwidge dat he use mout be mo' civiller," replied Uncle Si. "But he sho'ly am er hansum bird. My! but dem green an' red feeders am lubly. Whah he come fum, littl' mas'?"

"He came all the way from the forests of a country called Brazil; but Uncle Stuart found him in New York, where he had been taken to be taught to talk."

"Do dem birds hatter be eddicated befo' dey kin talk? I 'lowed dey jes' talked nachel."

"O no; they must be taught words, of course; for when they are first caught they have never heard any language but bird language, and we could not understand that."

"Is all dem parrots lak dat un?" asked Uncle Si looking curiously at the bird; for it was the first parrot he had ever seen.

"No, Uncle Si; this is a green Brazilian parrot, and it was caught on the banks of a river called the Amazon. Then there is a smaller gray parrot that comes from Africa. That's your country, you know."

"I dunno' nuffin' 'tall o' de sawt. Ol' Firginny's my kentry, an' I ain' gwine be pushed off on no udder," said Uncle Si, still true to his colors.

"Well, Africa is the country where your grandfather came from, you won't deny that.

But there are a great many birds that belong to the parrot family that are not exactly parrots. There are parroquets, macaws, cockatoos, and lorries; but they are all more or less like the true parrots. The largest of all of these is the great macaw. It is three feet long and is not a smart bird like the regular parrot. But all the birds of this family are lively and sociable. They don't go off to themselves to build their nests, but great crowds of them collect in the woods and have a regular bird town. They say that it is a funny thing to hear them screaming and chattering with each other. Of course they can't talk like my bird does until they are taught. Sometimes parrots live to be nearly a hundred years old."

"Dat alluz is seem er queer t'ing t' me, de idy o' dem critters talkin' lak folkses. Do yer reckon' dey's got souls?"

"Not unless all birds have souls, Uncle Si. But I am like you in thinking it a very strange and wonderful thing for a bird to talk. Come on, Polly, let's go to the house and get a cracker." At the word "cracker," Polly raised such a hue and cry, screaming, "Polly wants a cracker," that Uncle Si was glad to see her depart.

THE SNAKEBIRD.

“So yer’s tyerd o’ talkin’ ’bout bugs an’ creepy t’ings, is yer, littl’ mas’, and say yer’d lak t’ tek inter considration de fowels o’ de air?”



THE SNAKE BIRD.

Hab yer enny berry speshal favorites dat yo’d lak t’ ’scuss?”

“I think we have discussed most of my favorites, Uncle Si,” said Fletcher, seating himself leisurely on the “post-and-rail” fence in front of Uncle Si’s cabin. “But I do want to find out something about the snakebird. Have you ever seen one?”

“Dat I has, lit'l' mas'!” exclaimed the old man, delighted at an opportunity to air his superior knowledge. “I ain' neber seed nary un in ol' Firginny, nur yit in Tennessee, dough I ain' sayin' dey mouten be foun' at dem p'int. Whah I fus' tuk nodis ob 'em wer' down in Loosianner an' Floridy dat winter your paw went down dere runnin' from de ‘brown creeturs.’”

“The what, Uncle Si?” queried Fletcher with a smile.

“De ‘brown creeturs.’ I 'lows dey's er sawt o' bug dat gits in yo' froat an' mek yo' bark de whole indurin' winter.”

“O!” said Fletcher. “I understand. You mean bronchitis. Well, what about the snake-bird? Why do they call it *snakebird*? Does it eat snakes?”

“No, chile, no'ndeed! Dey call hit snake-bird bekase wid dat long slim neck and haid hit look fur all de worl' lak er snake risin' outen de watah.”

“Rising out of the water?” Fletcher exclaimed. “What is a bird doing in the water?”

“Er ketchin' fish; dat's what *dis* bird am er doin'. Dis am one o' dem birds what libs clost t' de watah an' mek's dere libin' by fishin'. Dey builds dere nes' in some ol' snag hangin' ober de watah, an' de ol' uns t'inks deys got er sof' job.

I'se watched 'em menny er time. Dey sets on er lim' ez still ez def, tell suddenly dey scoots down inter de watah; an' in a few minnits up dey comes pokin' dat snaky haid out ez dey wades eroun', an' jes' how menny fish goes down dat bird's froat indurin' dem few minnits, I ain' gwiner try t' say. I 'member hearin' ol' mas' say dat he gin one dat he had in er tank fish a'ter fish ontel he done et six, an' he 'lowed he'd stop befo' de critter kill hisself."

"What sort of looking bird is it, Uncle Si?"

"Why, hit am er beauty; dat's what it am. Hit wears er fine coat of black wid greenish teches here an' dere; den down de sides o' de neck runs a row ob white fedders sort o' tiffled off with laylock [lilac]. De wings is sort o' whitish, edged off wid black an' brownish bands an' red an' gray. He's a dandy for looks, am Mr. Snakebird; but his mate am not quite so gay in her dress, dough she am a berry neat-lookin' fowel." And with this Uncle Si went into the cabin to see if those potatoes he was roasting in the ashes were done.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

THE nightingale has so long been recognized as the queen of song that when we say of a person, "She is a veritable nightingale," we feel that we can pay no higher compliment to her



THE NIGHTINGALE.

musical powers. The name of this bird we have taken almost literally from the Anglo-Saxon *nihtegale*, which means a "singer of the night.

This beautiful singer is a native of Europe, Asia, and the north of Africa. It is also found in portions of England, but it is not seen in Ireland. Being a bird of passage, it is found in the

colder climes only during the nesting season, when it pours forth an ecstasy of song at intervals during the night. With touching forethought the male birds reach their summer home ten or fifteen days in advance of the females. It is at this time that they are usually caught. Before mating they are easily tamed, and soon become reconciled to captivity; but after they are paired they pine away and die if taken from their mates.

In proof that appearances are not to be relied upon, the nightingale is a modest-looking little bird about the size of the hedge sparrow. In its sober brown coat, alike in both sexes, one would never suspect it to be the silver-throated songster of which poets in every age have sung, but whose Heaven-taught notes are sweeter than poet or minstrel's song.

THE OWL.

THE nightingale and the owl have nothing in common save that they are both birds whose activities begin with the shades of the evening.



THE OWL.

But while the nightingale is pouring out his offering of song the owl is prowling around our henroost in the hope that he may lay hold on some unwary Biddy and make a meal of her.

Owl is the English name for nearly two hundred nocturnal birds of prey, seventeen of which are found in North America, while there is scarce a climate or a country in which some varieties are not abundant.

They vary in size, but are all distinguished by the short, heavy body, and the great staring, expressionless eyes. The universal brown color has tints of red and gray and sometimes white.

Owls delight to dwell in the somber gloom of dense forests, or in some deserted dwelling, where only their lugubrious, wailing cry is heard. Whether it is this weird cry or their lonely, unsocial habits, I know not, but among all peoples owls are regarded as birds of evil omen. I have seen men who would not shrink from shot or shell turn pale with horror at the sound of a harmless owl's mournful call, as if assured of some impending evil.

But the ancient Greeks do not seem to have shared in this feeling, as the owl was by them honored as the bird of wisdom. One who has watched the witless capers of this stupid bird must wonder how it could ever be associated with the idea of wisdom.

THE WOODPECKER.

“WHAT yer dribin’ at up dere, makin’ all dat racket an’ ’sturbin’ de res’ ob yo’ bettahs?” said



THE WOODPECKER.

Uncle Si one sultry July afternoon as he reluctantly opened his eyes and looked up into the

tree beneath which he was trying to take a nap. There just above him, clinging to the body of the tree, he espied a bright-hued bird, with its bars and spangles of black and green and yellow and its cap of red.

"Yes'm," said the old negro, his face regaining its wonted smile. "I 'low dat mus' be yer when I fus' hear dat 'tap, tap, tap.' Now I hain't no dejection t' yer runnin' yer bizness in dat apple o' mine, case I'se boun' t' say dem apples been heap bettah sence yer tuk up in dat tree and 'stroy de insecks on hit. I'se alluz willin' t' gib de debil hes jhu, but yer mout 'range yo' bizness sose not t' 'inflick wid dis ol' nigger's skejule. Dat's all. But ez yer is done busted up my nap, I mout ez well g'long an' git dem fish fur supper," and the old man went into his cabin to get his fishing pole, and the woodpecker went on with his "tap, tap," without heeding the interruption.

He was not making all that noise without a purpose, for he knew that the insects on which he lives were lurking in the bark of that tree. He is not only beautiful, with his bright feathers and red cap, but the woodpecker is one of the most useful of birds. He destroys myriads of insects which would do great damage to our trees. There are more than three hundred kinds of woodpeckers, and more than half of them are

found in North America; but in Great Britain there are only four varieties. These pretty birds are most plentiful in warm climates, where they do great good by destroying insects. When a nest is needed, instead of building it upon the leafy bough, with his sharp beak the woodpecker pierces a round hole to the very heart of the tree, and then works downward for a foot or two, where the eggs are laid. No grass nor straw is used in this strange nest.

A very interesting variety is the California woodpecker. These birds peck holes in the trees, and in these holes acorns and sometimes pebbles are fastened. As these birds migrate in winter, no one has ever been able to guess why these acorns are thus stored away.

The "redheaded woodpecker" and the golden-winged (sometimes called "yellow hammer") are the most commonly seen in Tennessee, and are familiar to all country children.

L. of C.

THE SNOWBIRD.

It was a dreary winter day, and Fletcher was confined within doors by a sore throat. The earth had on its beautiful white mantle, and



THE SNOWBIRD.

when Fletcher thought of the rabbits that had flecked the fields with their three-cornered tracks and of his precious “traps” for birds down in the meadow, he thought that his lot was hard indeed. As he stood with a frowning face and drummed upon the windowpane, a little bird

fluttered down from the snow-covered cedar tree and alighted upon the window sill.

"There's my snowbird!" he exclaimed with delight. "I have not seen him before this winter."

He ran to the dining room and came back with a handful of crumbs which he scattered on the window sill. The little bird gave a cheerful chirp, as if to say: "I am much obliged to you. I knew you would not forget me." He was a small, slate-colored fellow with a white breast. In summer he had a very merry song, but now it had dwindled to a mere chirp. But it was a cheerful sound, and it made Fletcher forget his troubles.

"See if he still wears his red string," suggested Fletcher's mother.

"Yes, there it is!" cried Fletcher in delight. "I was so afraid he would lose it."

The bird fluttered around merrily as on purpose to show the bit of red twine around his leg in token of his remembrance of past kindness. The winter before, this little bird had been wounded by some cruel boy, and Fletcher had found him almost frozen and unable to fly. He had brought the poor thing into the house and tenderly nursed him until he was able to fly about the room; then he tied the red string around his leg and opened the window. The bird looked

out into the big free world, and waited a moment as if he felt that it would be unkind to fly away and leave the friends who had been so good to him. Then Fletcher lifted him very tenderly and set him on the window sill, saying: "Go, little bird! I would love to keep you, but I know our cozy room would be a dreadful prison to you, for God has made you to be free. You love the cold, snowy world better than my good warm fire. So fly away, and when you need a friend come back to me."

And now, after a whole year had passed, the little fellow had returned, showing that love and kindness are not forgotten even by a bird. He had made his winter home in a haystack near Mr. Beaumont's house; and now, when he could not find even a few dried berries on the hackberry tree, he had come back to the window just when Fletcher needed something to draw his mind away from himself. He hopped about on the window sill picking up the crumbs, and all the time singing his grateful little song. When he had eaten all he wanted he looked up to Fletcher as if to say, "Thank you; I will come back when I get hungry," and flitted away into the snow. But he had made Fletcher forget his sore throat, and he got his natural history and found out a good deal about snowbirds. He discovered that, besides his little friend, the

North American slate-colored snowbird, there is another similar bird called the snow bunting. Its tail and wings are partly white, varied with a rich brown, but the rest of its feathers are pure white. This bird abounds in all parts of the arctic regions in summer, but in the winter it is seen in the southern parts of North America, Europe, and Asia. In Lapland, two thousand feet above the level of the sea, this hardy bird is the only living creature seen.



THE HUMMING BIRD.

THE HUMMING BIRD.

THIS beautiful, gemlike creature that flits from flower to flower with such airy grace is found only in America and its islands. Its brilliant colors defy description, for there is scarce a shade or a tint but is found in its plumage. Most persons think that the humming bird, like the bee, lives upon the honeyed sweetness of flowers, and the peculiar manner in which it dips its head into the heart of the flowers encourages this idea; but ornithologists tell us that the humming bird is not in quest of honey from the flowers, but feeds upon the insects hidden in their leaves.

One who has observed these birds closely will doubtless have noticed the buzzing sound made by the swift vibrations of their wings, and it is thus they gained the name humming bird.

CANARIES.

THE bright-hued canary with which we are familiar is very different from the canary in its



THE CANARY.

wild state. These birds first came from Madeira and the Canary Islands. In its wild state the canary lacks the brilliant plumage to which we are accustomed, but has a coat of brownish gray. These sweet singers were brought to Europe in the sixteenth century, but have been much improved since then. The song of the

wild bird is louder and clearer, but that of the tame canary is sweeter and more melodious. In the Tyrol many people employ themselves in rearing canaries, and it is said that their birds are the finest singers in the world.

Bird students claim that in their native state the female chooses her mate for the sweetness of his song, and that sometimes the male will sing with such fervor that he bursts his delicate throat and dies.

People who make a business of rearing canaries place them in a dark room where a nightingale is singing, and they soon learn to catch its song. Where great pains are taken canaries will sometimes learn to carry a tune, or even to speak a few words.

THE ORIOLE.

“No, chile, I cain’t gib no skyentifical pints ’bout de oriole. Dis ol’ niggah’s haid peah to be gittin kinder addled dese days. Go ax yo’ paw;



THE ORIOLE.

he’s ez high larnt ez de Perfessor when hit com’ t’ birds. Go ax him, and lemme hill up dis cel’ry.” So away went Fletcher, and this is what his father, who knew all about birds, told him:

“Ornithologists claim that there is only one bird properly called the oriole, and that the various bright-hued birds of America which we

call orioles are not orioles at all. The real European oriole is, on account of its color, called the 'golden oriole.' This is a beautiful and fascinating bird, and a great favorite in Europe. It has a sweet, flutelike song which sounds so much like the human voice that the Italian peasants believe the oriole speaks their language. It is fond of insects, especially such as live upon fruit trees, but is such a timid bird that it hesitates to approach the abode of man. When it determines to make a raid upon the insects of an orchard it puts out sentinels who give the alarm when the enemy, man, approaches.

"The bird flourishes best in a warm climate, and is found in great numbers in Italy and other countries of Southern Europe. But, as we love our country and our own birds best, we will leave the European oriole, and come to our own birds of that name. Whether they are orioles in the books or not, they are orioles to us, and such we shall continue to call them. There is the bullock oriole, of the Pacific Coast; the orchard oriole, of the Eastern States; the hooded and Scott's oriole, of Texas and Arizona. But the one which our Southern young people know and love best is our beautiful Baltimore oriole. This is sometimes called the golden robin or fiery hangbird, and is ad-

mired both for its brilliant plumage and exquisite song.

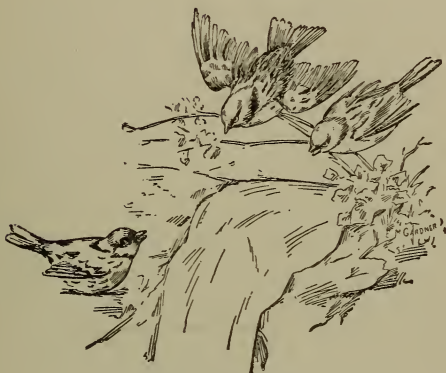
“When a child I used to wonder if this bird came from the city of Baltimore, and was on that account called the ‘Baltimore’ oriole. When I was older I learned that it gained its name from its brilliant coat of black and gold. Black and yellow being the chief colors in Lord Baltimore’s coat of arms, this brilliant songster was named in his honor, as was also the city which bears his name.

“In summer the oriole is found from Florida to New Brunswick, but in winter it leaves for a warmer climate. It closely resembles the weaving birds of Asia and Africa, but is even more skillful in the construction of its nest. The long, pouch-shaped nest is woven and interwoven with flaxlike plants, and is hung from the very extremity of the branch. This oriole is a most devoted parent, and will protect her young with her life. Often when the branch on which the nest hangs is cut from the tree the mother bird will return to the nest and sit there until, out of pity, some one will carry her and her young into the house.

“Orioles are readily tamed, and do not pine in captivity like most free birds. They seem to become attached to their captors, and will not leave even when given full liberty of the house.”

THE SPARROW.

“It seems but fitting,” began the Professor, “that our little talks about our feathered friends should include this bird, for it has been conse-



THE SPARROW.

crated by the Saviour's mention and the promise of his tender care, for has he not said: ‘Not one of them is forgotten before God?’

“The name ‘sparrow’ was originally applied to nearly all small birds; and it may surprise you to know that many of the birds which we call sparrows are not sparrows at all, but most of them belong to the family of finches. They are of great variety, and have little in common

with their warlike cousin, the English sparrow, of which we shall presently speak.

“Besides the many little birds improperly called sparrows, there are many varieties which belong to the true sparrow family. But the four principal kinds are: The English or house sparrow, the hedge sparrow, the tree sparrow, the reed sparrow. The last three varieties are found in America, but are rare as compared to the big, burly, contentious English sparrow, which is so familiar to us all that it needs no description. These sparrows were brought from England to this country about 1850, in the hope that they would destroy the caterpillars which ravaged the crops. They did indeed destroy the caterpillars, but when they had finished them they went to work upon the crops, and did more damage than the caterpillars. They are, you know, great warriors, and have done much harm by driving away our native birds, such as orioles, wrens, bluebirds, etc. One who has reached middle age will remember that the trees about our homes used to be vocal with the songs of our native birds, but now we look almost in vain for their bright plumage, and their happy songs are hushed. The belligerent catbird seems alone to have held his ground, and still comes to steal our grapes and cherries and to divert us with his mischievous ways.

“The English sparrow loves to build its nest in a hole of a wall, though sometimes its rude, dome-shaped nest hangs high in a tree. They raise from four to six broods each season, so that it is not strange that thirty-six years after they were brought to this country they had spread from Maine to California. They do so much harm to seeds, fruit germs, etc., that many efforts have been made to keep them in check. Ohio offers a premium for killing them, and in New York it is a misdemeanor to feed or shelter them. The farmers claim that only the young in their nest, and for one week after leaving it, feed upon insects, and then they join the adult birds in their raids upon the crops. In England ‘sparrow clubs’ are formed to aid in their destruction.

“They seem to thrive in any climate, as they are found in Africa, India, and even in the frozen land of Siberia. They appear to follow man, as they are never found in uninhabited countries. So great is their fondness for the haunts of man that our towns and cities are full of them; yet here, as in the country, they do more harm than good.

“Their flesh is good for food, but they are so small and troublesome to dress that they are rarely eaten in America. However, the French kill them in great numbers for food.”

THE OSTRICH.

CHRISTMAS was so near at hand that the Professor found it a hard matter to fasten Fletcher's



THE OSTRICH.

attention to his school duties. The boys of the neighborhood were organizing a mammoth hunting expedition for Christmas week, and such talks of powder and caps and bullets had not been since the war. Such burnishing of guns and overhauling of game bags was enough to

make one think that Nimrod, the mighty hunter, had come back to earth. So the Professor tried to select the most interesting animals he could find; and, as Fletcher had often expressed curiosity about the ostrich, he concluded to study up a little on that subject. Fletcher had often seen the ostrich; had admired its beautiful plumage and its majestic appearance.

“You are so familiar with the appearance of the ostrich that it is hardly worth while to say much about that,” said the Professor. “Most of the ostriches found to-day come from Africa, though occasionally they are seen in Persia, Assyria, and most Oriental countries. We all know that they require a warm climate; their habits are such as would forbid them to thrive in a cold climate. In Southern Africa sometimes a company of nearly fifty will be seen together, associating with antelopes or zebras; but usually each cock forms a company of four or five hens, and this little harem remains together during the breeding season. The male ostrich is certainly a most chivalrous bird. His hens all lay their eggs in the same nest, and this nest is always on the ground. With their feet they hollow out a nest in the warm sand, and here the eggs are laid. As soon as a dozen or so accumulate the cock begins to brood. At night he sits on the eggs, and during the day the hens

relieve each other. It is thought that the ostrich sits over the eggs more to protect them from jackals and other enemies than to hatch out the young, as this has often been known to be done by the sun alone. The hens lay about thirty eggs in the nest, and then all around it they deposit as many more."

"What is that for?" asked Fletcher, very much interested.

"Careful observers say that these loose eggs are left there until the brood begins to hatch, and then are broken by the old birds for the young. This looks reasonable, as the small ostriches could not subsist on such hard food as their parents find in the arid districts where ostriches usually dwell. The ostrich is a wonderfully fond parent, and will guard its young with the utmost care.

"Why does it stay in such desolate places? Why doesn't it hunt the best parts of the country?" inquired Fletcher.

"Because the ostrich loves solitude more than anything else. There are so many animals of prey that feed upon its eggs and its young that it seems to feel that its only safety lies in keeping apart from these. And of man it wisely stands in terror, and is so fleet-footed that the swiftest horse stands but little show in a fair race. Ostrich feathers are in such demand and

bring such good prices that many ostrich farms have been established in Cape Colony and other places. Here the ostriches are kept in confinement and reared just as we rear other fowls. At regular intervals their plumage is taken from them just as you have seen Uncle Si pick your mother's geese. Of course the feathers grow back again. When you remember that a male ostrich is often nearly eight feet high and weighs three hundred pounds, it would seem that this ought to be a profitable business.

“Can ostriches fly, Professor?”

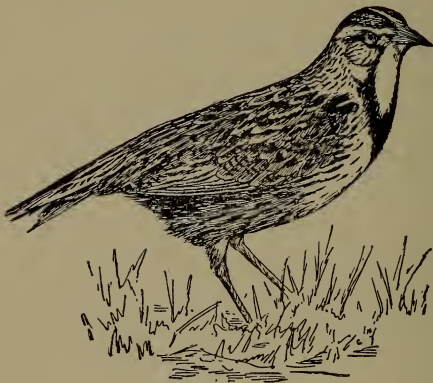
“No; their wings are too short for that, but their feet carry them over the ground so fast that I should think they would scarcely care to fly.”

THE LARK.

Who does not recall the childish ditty:

The lark is up to meet the sun,
The bee is on the wing?

The very word "lark" brings to us a sense of freshness and vernal beauty. There are over



THE LARK.

one hundred varieties of larks; but to an Englishman the word will always mean the merry, warbling skylark, the darling of all the poets, and beloved of all with a heart for true melody.

Unlike most birds, the skylark seems to increase in proportion as a country becomes more

highly cultivated, and, instead of fearing the approach of man, the skylark seems to cling to him as a friend and protector. On those vast and beautiful estates in England, which are like one ever-lengthening garden, it is said that innumerable hosts of skylarks fill the air with their "gladsome and heart-lifting notes." They usually nest among the growing corn, which protects the young until they are able to take care of themselves; and this they do quite young.

The skylark is gentle and easily tamed, and even when caged pours forth its notes at all times, save in the molting season. Being a migratory bird, on the approach of cold weather it plumes its flight for a warmer climate; and as it passes through Great Britain on its way to the tropics thousands are trapped and sold for food in the London market. The skylark is found in nearly all the countries of Europe, but England is its favorite home.

The wood lark, another European bird, is a good singer, but its notes are neither so rich nor so varied as those of the skylark. It is more delicate, and does not thrive in captivity, although it is often tamed.

Ornithologists tell us that there is only one genuine lark in America—that is, native to this country. This bird in Europe is known as the

shore lark, and in England it is called the bell-bird, because of its melodious call. It too is migratory. So we must give up our meadow lark, tree lark, titlark, and other larks; or, if we still cling to them, we must remember that, like the bogus colonel, they are not really larks, but belong to other species.

THE FLAMINGO.

“WHAT a queer bird, and what a queer name!” exclaimed Fletcher. “What does flamingo mean?”

“This interesting water bird,” answered the Professor, “gains its name from the flame-colored patch upon its wings, and when hundreds



THE FLAMINGO.

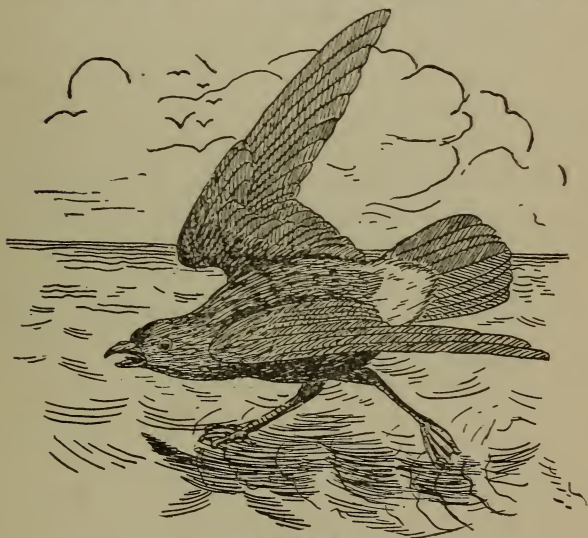
of them are seen together in marshes or upon river banks in Asia and Africa they form a spectacle of wonderful beauty. In the old world four species of flamingo are found, and four in the new world. They are most common along the borders of the Mediterranean Sea. They are birds of powerful wing, and when journey-

ing they fly either in strings or in wedge-shaped flocks like geese.

The flamingo belongs to the family of waders, and seeks its food in the water. When feeding it keeps its feet in almost perpetual motion, as if stirring the mud. The peculiar manner in which flamingos perform the duty of "sitting" is so well described by an old writer that I will read it to you: 'They build their nests in shallow ponds where there is much mud, which they scrape together in little hillocks like small islands, appearing out of the water a foot and a half from the bottom. They make the foundation on these hillocks broad, bringing them up tapering to the top, where they leave a small hollow pit to lay their eggs in. And when they either lay their eggs or hatch them, they stand all the while—not on the hillock, but close beside it—with their legs on the ground and in the water, resting themselves against the hillock and covering the hollow nest upon it.'"

THE PETREL.

WHILE we all know that the petrel is an aquatic bird, how many of us know what its name signifies? When I tell you that petrel is a diminutive of Peter, and that these birds are called “sea runners,” you will see at once “they are



THE PETREL.

called petrels because, like Peter, they walk upon the water.”

There are over a hundred varieties of petrel, and some member of the family is to be found

throughout all the seas and oceans of the world; but they are most abundant in the Southern Ocean. Of the one hundred varieties, that oftenest found in the North Atlantic is known as the stormy petrel. By sailors these little birds, that look like common swallows, are known as "Mother Carey's chickens," and their appearance is considered an unfailing harbinger of foul weather. They skim over the surface of the water with an ease and grace that fill the landlubber with wondering admiration. Some of the species never come to land except in the nesting season. Like so many aquatic birds, the hen lays but one egg, and leaves her nest only during the night.

A peculiarity of the petrel is that its stomach is filled with an oil which oozes from its mouth and nostrils when the bird is wounded. This oil is a valuable article of commerce.

THE EAGLE.

THE Professor and Fletcher had come to the *Falconidæ* among the bird families, and, as a wide-awake young American, Fletcher took a lively interest in the bird which is our country's proud emblem, the type and symbol of our aspiring young republic. So the pupil and the teacher were on the very best of terms and ready to give and to receive instruction.

"As the lion is among beasts, so is the eagle among birds," began the Professor. "When we speak of the eagle, our imagination pictures something noble and aspiring, something worthy to be called 'the king of birds.' We find the eagle in all parts of the world, and in all cases it is accounted as lord of the feathered tribe, and an emblem of power."

"How many kinds of eagles are there?" asked Fletcher.

"There are eight or ten different varieties, but the principal kinds are the bald eagle, sea eagle, and mountain eagle."

"Let's have the bald eagle first," insisted Fletcher, like the true American that he was.

"You know how he looks," said the Professor; "his dark plumage, white head, neck, and tail are familiar to us all."



EAGLE.

“He looks as if he knew a great deal and felt that he was king of the birds, doesn’t he?” asked Fletcher, as he gazed at the picture of this powerful bird. “Look at his strong, sharp claws, and



THE EAGLE.

his hooked bill. I should not like to be caught by them. He must be at least three feet long.”

“Yes, these eagles are often forty inches long and eight feet from tip to tip of wing. They

love to breed near a river in a lofty tree; and, unlike most birds, the same nest is used year after year, the bird only retouching it by adding a few sticks and branches. It is by no means choice as to its food, but will consume a lamb, a duck, or goose, and even a small child with equal relish. Well do I remember the story of an old lady who lived near the Tennessee river in early days. She was down by the river bank washing, and her baby was crawling about on the white sand. Before she could realize what was happening, an immense bald eagle swooped down and carried away her little one."

"Did she never get it back?" asked Fletcher, his eyes filling with tears.

"Never. Not even a trace of it could be found. Doubtless the eagle carried it to its nest—or ærie, as it is called—and there devoured it. Now we come to the sea eagle. In its habits it is much like the bald eagle, only it is of a grayish-brown color, with paler head and yellow beak. These birds live mainly upon fish, and seem to find much pleasure in robbing the osprey of its fish just as it rises from the river. This is a British species, and is not found in the new world south of Greenland."

"What about the golden eagle?" said Fletcher.

"That is sometimes called the mountain eagle.

It is found in Europe, Asia, and Africa, as well as Great Britain. The feathers of the neck and head are of a rich golden red, and the body a rich dark brown. It is the largest of European eagles, and easily carries a lamb to its ærie, where it is devoured. This eagle is often tamed and taught to catch prey for its master. It is kept by the Tartars to catch antelopes, foxes, and wolves. It is carried hooded on horseback until it reaches the spot where the prey is sought. While these eagles are so easily tamed, they breed in mountains far from the haunts of men. When paired, they have an almost human affection for each other, and never seek another mate."

THE BAT.

*"One fer de blackbird, two fer de crow;
Three fer de cutworm, an' fo' fer t' grow"—*

chanted Uncle Si as he dropped the grains of corn into the open furrow. "Dat min's me ob er mity nice tale'bout er pet crow what had hes tung split sose he could talk. Speck I'd better tell yer 'bout 'im."

"Now you can't work that racket on me, Uncle Si," interrupted Little Boy, who was trudging along at the old darky's heels. "I told you I was tired of birds, and the Professor promised to begin on animals to-day."

"But dis wer' er pet crow, sonny, an' hit wer' lik'wise er talkin' crow."

"Can't help that; it was a bird all the same, and I tell you I am tired of birds."

"Well, well! effen yer won't, yer won't," said Uncle Si, pretending to be greatly disgruntled. "Yer's enough lak yer pappy t' hab er min' ob yer own, an' 'tain' no use t' go agin' yer."

For a few moments the two pursued their way in silence, and then Uncle Si resumed: "I tell yer what I'll do. I'm gwine t' split de diffunce wid yer. Effen yer's atter beastes, hit am er

beas'; an' effen yer's atter birds, hit mout be called er bird. Can yer guess dat riddle?"

Fletcher studied a moment and then clapped his hands, crying: "Yes, it's a bat."

"Dat am kerreck," answered Uncle Si, beaming all over. "Now what yer want er kno' 'bout dem critters?"

"I want to know whether they are really blind, Uncle Si. You know people say: 'As blind as a bat.'"



LEATHER-WING BAT.

"No 'n deed, chile! Dere eyes am pow'ful littl', an effen dey gits kotch out in de daylite 'peahs lak dey gits kinder flambustercated. I s'pose de strong lite hurt dere eyes. But yer jes' put Mr. Bat out in de dahk, an' yer bet y' bottom dollah he gwine beat yu'n' me seein'."

"What do bats eat, Uncle Si?"

"Why dey libs mos'ly offen bugs an' sich; an'

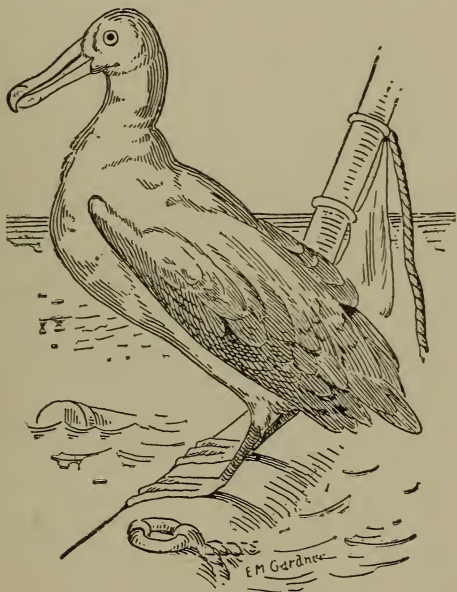
dat's what dey's er doin' ob nights er flitterin' roun' so. Effen de wedder am so col' hit kill all de bugs, why den Mr. Bat he jes' hang hese'f up by dem hin' laigs in som ol' tree; an' effen yer didn't kno' dere capers, yer'd say: 'My! jes' look at dem ded bats!' But bimeby, when de bugs gin t' stir, dem bats wak' up as libely es ebber."

"How do they feed the little young bats?" asked Fletcher with increasing interest.

"Now I was jes' erribin' at dat p'int, honey. Dey suckles 'em jes fur all de worl' like mices. 'Deed, dey bodies looks like mices; an' dat fack alluz proob t' me dat dey is beastes, kase birds ain' nebber bin kno'd to suckle dere young. But bats brings awful bad luck; so we'd better let 'em erlone an' mosy t' de house, kase I 'members dat Aunt Mimy say she gwine hab bile custud fer dinner."

THE ALBATROSS.

“THERE is so much,” said the Professor,
“about these winged wanderers of the deep to
interest the mind and charm the fancy that, like



THE ALBATROSS.

one in a garden overgrown with flowers, one
pauses and hesitates which to cull.

“You love the mystic tales of the old Greeks,
(133)

and will be interested to know that even the name given to the albatross is tinged with romantic suggestion. The companions of the Greek warrior, Diomedes, according to the fantastic belief of that day, were turned into sea birds, and hence the species are called *Diomedea*.

“The albatross is the largest and most powerful of aquatic birds. It has webbed feet, a beak long, sharp, and strong, well fitted for seizing and holding its food. There are three varieties of these birds, but the largest and best known is the wandering albatross; and of this only I will tell you, as it has all the characteristics of the others. Its body is often four feet long, and its slender wings, when extended, measure from ten to fifteen feet. Its soft, abundant plumage is a dusky white, with bands of black or brown and wings of a darker hue than the body.

“Its principal food is found in the smaller fish, which it catches from the water; but it does not disdain any animal refuse which comes in its way; and, like the vulture, does not hesitate to feed upon carrion.

“No other sea bird has such strength of wing, and it seems entirely undisturbed by wind or waves. Sailors love to tell of how an albatross will follow a ship for days, never resting upon the waves, but circling above and around the

vessel, and, if it sleeps at all, sleeping upon the wing. Seafaring men hold this bird in the most superstitious esteem, and innumerable stories are told of the evil which befalls him who braves the fates by shooting this bird of good omen. And when we picture the solitary ship, league upon league from the sheltering shore, we can well imagine how the companionship of even these daring birds would cheer the lonely mariner, and how their shrill cry would seem like the voice of a human friend. You must read Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner,' and you will never forget the superstition with which this bird is regarded by seamen.

"The albatross is seen on all the Southern seas; and it so abounds near the Cape of Good Hope that sailors call it 'the cape sheep.' In the nesting season it ceases its wanderings over the deep, and seeks a solitary island or some rugged hiding place near the sea. In a rude nest on the ground it lays a single egg about four inches long.

"The flesh of the albatross is tough, and by us would be pronounced entirely unfit for food; but the hardy inhabitants of Kamchatka not only eat the bird, but use its long wing bones for making various articles, especially tobacco pipes.

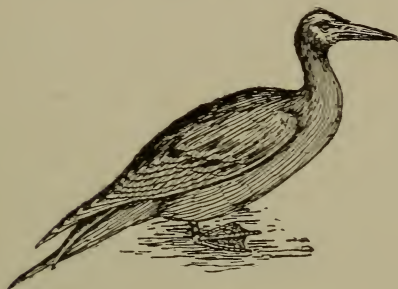
"Like the cormorant, it is a greedy bird, and

after gorging itself sits stupid and motionless upon the waves. In this condition it does not resist capture, and is easily caught with the hand.

“The albatross is sometimes called the great gull; and it is, indeed, closely allied to the gulls and the petrels—all of them belonging to the family of long-winged birds. Its cry is like that of the pelican, and that it is harsh and unmusical may be known when we recall that it is often compared to the braying of an ass. But when heard above the din and roar of the waters it has a strange weird music all its own.”

THE GANNET.

“YER ain’ nebber seed er gannet? Well, I ’low yer nebber has, case yer ain’ nebber had de ’vantage ob libin’ close t’ de oshun. Some



THE GANNET.

folks call de gannet de solon goose, an’ hit do look pow’ful lak er goose; but I’s e allers hearn hit called gannet.”

“What size is it, Uncle Si,” said Fletcher, who had come down for a social chat in the old darky’s cabin.

“Well, t’ look at hit, ye’d say hit wer’ ’bout de size ob er goose, but when yer git er good zarn on ’im yer notice dat dere am er diff’unce. De gannet am erbout ez sizerble ez de goose, but hit feel mo’ lighter when yer git yo’ han’ on ’im, dough de wings an’ tail am longah dan de goose’s.

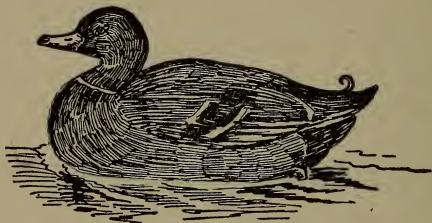
But, yer see, hit tak' sumpin' mo' solider dan fedders t' mak' size. What color am hit? Well, littl' mas', dat depen' on when yer tak' notice on 'im. Effen yer happen t' prowl er-roun' de nes' when de young am fust hatched, yer'd be mighty apt t' say: 'Dat littl' ol' necked slate-culled critter ain' no sawt o' fowel; hit am nuffin' but er blin' animule ob er pow'ful ornary fambly at dat.' But bime by dem littl' swelt-out eyes com' open, an' dat necked body am kivered wid white down. Den, arter er while, dat down all pass erway, an' de littl' gannet git on er coat ob nice brown fedders on top, but mo' lighter undah de breas'; an' ebber fedder am got er nice roun' top o' white at de eend. Hit keep dese brown fedders nigh erbout free year; den dat young gannet hit say to hitse'f: 'Reckon I'm erbout ez big er man ez my ma an' my pa, an' I'm wo' out habin' de udder fowels say I don't ex-emble my parents er bit.' So dat free-year-ol' gannet he hop inter er fine suit o' white wid er buff collar roun' de neck an' black trimmin' on de wing. Den hit say t' hitse'f, 'I'se big ernuff t' go inter business for myse'f;' an' hit go t' wuk t' fix up er nes'. But dat nes' ain' scasely wuvly ob de name; hit ain' nuffin' t' all but er scratched-out place on de groun', sometimes wid er passel o' grass an' truck in hit, an' sometimes nuffin' t' all but de groun'. Den de gannet lay

jes' one aig—no mo'—wid er white, chalky shell. Dat aig, when hit am hatched, tuhns out ernudder littl' blin', necked, slate-culled animule ez we wuz talkin' 'bout jes' now. De gannets dey doan com' an' stay at one place an' cyar on deir business all de year roun', lak de blue jay an' de English sparrer an' some mo' whose room am bettah dan deir cump'ny—no, sah! De gang's gwin' ter come t' de place whah dey 'low t' raise der fambly 'bout de las' o' March an' de fust ob April, an' den in de fall dey picks up all deir young uns dey's hatched out, an' erway de whole shebang scoots t' some warm kintry t' spen' de winter. Dey's stylish folks, de gannet fambly am; an' how dey do lub fishes! 'Deed, dat's mos'ly what dey libs on. Er gang o' gannets out on er fishin' tower am er putty sight. Dey all flies in er line, an' whenebber er bird gits ready t' take er dive, down hit goes, kerzip, inter de watah, an' comes out lookin' ez inner-cent ez ef nuffin' t' all ain't happen. Den, jes lak er soljer, dat bird goes t' de r'ar, so's not t' break de line. I'se hearn de fishers say dey kin track de schools o' herrin' by watchin' d' gannet flop down."

Fletcher afterwards asked the Professor, and learned that the gannet is a web-footed sea fowl found near our coasts from Greenland to the Gulf, as well as in Europe and in Britain.

MR. AND MRS. DADDLES.

“I FEEL a warm breeze from the north stirring among my feathers this morning,” said Mr. Daddles, as his mate was leisurely sunning herself



THE MALLARD DUCK.

and gazing over the Mississippi's broad expanse, “and that tells me that it will soon be time for us to set out for our mountain resort.”

“But why not stay here? I like Mississippi better than those Tennessee mountains you are always raving about,” said Mrs. Daddles, who, like most ladies, had her own ideas about a place to live.

“Why, my dear, the climate of Mississippi is well enough for winter, but it is not a fit summer home for ducks. Your eggs would not hatch so well, and the little ducklings would most likely pine away and die.”

Mrs. Daddles sulked a little, but finally gave

in, as most wives do, and the very next morning she and Mr. Daddles set out for their summer in the Tennessee mountains. They had no baggage, but flew away, and when they were hungry felt no compunctions about helping themselves to whatever they saw, and said not a word about pay.

When they had flown what seemed a long way they reached a lovely country with blue mountains in the distance, and rows of bluffs on one side of the river, while down to the very water's edge on the other side swept such rich sandy "bottoms" as were a delight to behold.

"Now, dearest, this is the place I have been telling you about, and here we will make our first home. Yonder is the very ledge of rock in which my mother made the nest where I was hatched, and it would make us a lovely home."

So they raked together a little dry grass and some leaves and constructed a crude nest under the shelving bluff where no one would ever find it. In this nest every night Mrs. Daddles laid a beautiful bluish egg until she had laid ten. Then she stopped, and the duty of incubation began. And now she did a funny thing. Day by day she would pluck the soft down from her own breast and put it in the nest among those precious eggs, until they were quite snug in their feather bed. She rarely left the nest, and never

until Mr. Daddles had carefully reconnoitered and assured her there was no danger. Then she would pull the feather coverlet over her eggs, so that they would keep warm and be safe from prying eyes.

In four weeks nine downy, dumpy ducklings thrilled the mother's heart with joy, and Mr. Daddles was quite as proud of them as if he had hatched out the whole gang himself.

In a day or two the little ones were taken to the water and taught to swim, and the insects thought that surely the little Daddles could never be filled from the way they gobbled them up.

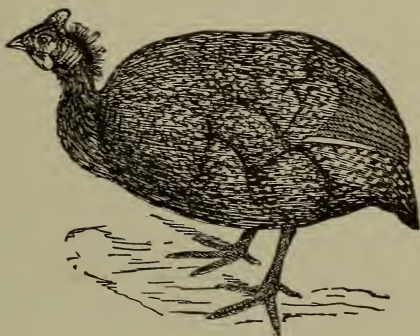
By the first of November the brood was quite large and vigorous, and Mr. Daddles felt a stirring at his heart and something seemed to say: "Away! away!"

But Mrs. Daddles sighed and demurred, just as she had done about leaving Mississippi. "Dear me!" she said, "I was in hopes I was settled for life! But here you go again."

But nevertheless Mr. Daddles carried the day, and eleven Daddleses instead of two started for the rice fields and the orange groves. But, as they sailed over Mr. Beaumont's plantation Fletcher raised his gun, and one beautiful mallard fell at his feet. And Fletcher brought it to Uncle Si with much pride, for it was the first wild duck he had ever killed.

UNCLE SI'S GUINEAS.

“OL’ mas’ may brag ’bout his fine bronje tukkeys, an’ ol’ mis’ may ’low dat dem white Leggons o’ hern am de boss o’ de poultry yahd, but



THE GUINEA.

’cordin’ t’ my notion, dat gang o’ guinnys can’t be hopped er past,” and Uncle Si listened to their querulous “pot rack” with supreme satisfaction.

“I doan want no better comp’ny den er passel er guinnys, kase dey’s alluz chufful an’ libely an’ ready t’ strak up er convussion. An’ what’s moh, dey ain’t all gab, nudder—dere’s bizness ’bout guinnys. Dey’s lak de June apple; dey comes in jes’ when dey’s needed de

mos'. Atter all de ol' hens gone ter cluckin' erroun' an' is plum pas' layin' aigs, but is got dere haids full o' chickens, dem guinnys dey jes' gits down t' dere wuk an' shells out dem aigs, an' doan yer fergit it. Dem ol' Brahmer hens what ol' mis' tuk sech er shine t', dey ain' gwine lay mo'n fo', five aigs, den dey frizzles up dere fedders an' goes er cluckin' roun' fum mawnin' tell night. But all de time dat tidy little guinny hen she slip out t' de bushes an' lay an' lay ontell sometimes she lay thutty er fawty aigs, den mebbe she put 'er min' on settin'. Yes, de guinny am ondoubtedly de fowl fur me," and Uncle Si took up a basket of the little brown speckled eggs and put them under Mrs. Brahma, saying as he did so: "Now, miss, you set dere tell yer hatch out dem aigs, bein' yer's crazy fur de bizness. An' hit's gwin' er tek fo' weeks t' change dem littl' aigs inter guinnys, an' yer needn' be hoppin' offen dat nes' no sooner."

Then Uncle Si sprinkled some crumbled tobacco leaves into the nest, and left Mrs. Brahma to her favorite occupation. As he turned to enter his cabin he encountered Fletcher, who had been an amused listener to his soliloquy. "But, Uncle Si," he began, for he loved to tease the old darky, "what makes your favorite fowl so foolish? Don't you know if you put your hand in a guinea's nest she will leave it?"

"In co's I does," replied Uncle Si, "but dat ain' nuffin' ergin de guinny. She 'low folks ain' got no bizness projeckin' roun' her nes', an' I doan blame 'er fer dat; contrariwise, I kinder glory in 'er spunk."

"O, I know it's of no use to say anything against anything or anybody you like," laughed Fletcher; "it only seems to make you like them all the more. But I am going to ask you one question; and if you answer that all right, I'll give you a new knife for a Christmas present. Why do you call them guineas?"

The old darky scratched his head and studied profoundly for a moment. "Well, littl' mas'," he finally said, "I'se hearn all my life dat Guinny niggers cum' fum Aferky; an' if Guinny niggers com' fum dere, Guinny fowls mus' er com' fum dere too!"

"That's a pretty good answer," replied Fletcher, "and I'll have to get the knife for you. There are four or five kinds of guinea fowls, and they all came from Africa, but that was a long time ago, and the guinea fowls seem to feel as much at home with us as the darkies do," and the boy stroked the old man's horny hand with a tenderness that was strong and enduring.

THE GOOSE FLETCHER SHOT.

EVER since Fletcher brought down that beautiful mallard he had pursued his studies in nat-



THE WILD GOOSE.

ural history with fresh zeal, and his questions about all kinds of migratory fowls were a great delight to the Professor. For, like all teachers who have the interest of their pupils at heart, our Professor realized that the lesson which is thought of only in the school is not digested and is of little permanent benefit. On the French Broad, where Mr. Beaumont's beautiful plantation lay, wild ducks and geese and every species of waterfowl common to that section were found

in great abundance, and the country people prophesied as to the severity of the winter by the time the wild goose set out for its Southern home. Its shrill cry was familiar to Fletcher, and was as sweet to his ear as it was to the Romans on that long ago night when it warned them of the enemy's approach. To kill a wild goose was the dream of his boyish heart, and when one fine autumn day that dream was realized he felt a thrill that only the huntsman's heart can know. He brought it in to the Professor, who duly marveled over its size, its beauty, and its wondrous fatness. Of all the geese that had ever been killed in Tennessee, there was never a goose like that. At least Fletcher thought so. Aunt Mimy prepared it for the table in her very best style, and all agreed that a fat goose made a dinner not to be disdained.

"Why is it," asked Fletcher of the Professor, "that my natural history speaks of the gray lag goose as the origin of all our tame geese—why do they call it the lag goose, I mean?"

"This is a question that has puzzled many naturalists," replied the Professor with a smile, "but Prof. Skeat observes that the term may have the same meaning as in the word 'laggard,' one who loiters or stays behind; as when the gray goose received its name it was not migratory, but lagged behind its comrades when

they started for their brooding places in the North."

"And are all our domestic geese but variations of this gray lag goose?" asked Mrs. Beaumont with interest.

"Yes, they are all supposed to be, and the change in size, color, etc., have been brought about by differences in climate, breeding, and so on. But the chief change in plumage is that the tame geese lose the darker shades of the wild variety and become more or less white."

"I have never thought we set the proper value on the goose as a table fowl," said Mr. Beaumont, "but they are very popular with the Jews. During the war I boarded for a time with a Jewish family, and a fat goose was one of our regular Sunday luxuries, and it *was* a luxury, too.

"Then, how would we get along without their feathers?" asked Mrs. Beaumont, whose feather beds were noted all over the neighborhood.

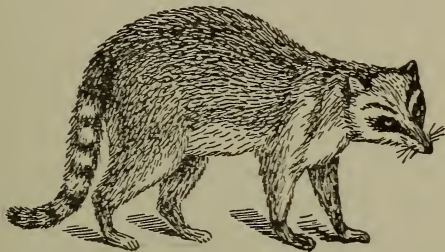
"An effen yer'll skuse me fer sayin' hit, dere ain' nuffin mo' s'archin' den goose ile," said Uncle Si, who had come in to replenish the fire.

"Doan yer 'member how yer uster sen' me ten mile t' git er few draps when littl' mas' ober dere had de croup?"

"Well, I guess the goose is a pretty useful fowl; but, in my opinion, the best part is shooting it," said Fletcher, as the circle broke up.

MR. RACCOON'S CHARACTER.

FLETCHER had been given a bright new silver dollar by his bachelor uncle, with no limitation as to how it should be spent except that he was to "buy something useful." He could



THE RACCOON.

not quite make up his mind as to how he wished to invest it, so, as he usually did in his boyish perplexities, he went over to counsel with Uncle Si.

The old darky laid aside his ax and sat down on the wood pile, in order that he might give the important question his entire attention.

"So yer wants my invice 'bout 'vestin' dat dollah what yo' uncle done guv yer. Dis ol' niggah's invice doan 'mount t' much, but ef ennybody's hankerin' atter it dey suttinly am welcum t' it free gratis fur nuffin. Now, den, ez de

passon say, fustly, is yer bin circumsquatulating 'bout enny speshul t'ing yer'd lak t' buy?"

"Well, not exactly," answered Fletcher, with some hesitation: "I had thought a little about that pet coon of Bill Morton's. He says he'll take a dollar for it."

Uncle Si gave a low, suppressed whistle and exclaimed: "De lan's sake! Littl' mas', what in de name o' peace yer gwine do wid er coon? Doan yer kno' hit ud bodaceously tarri-fy ol' mis' t' def? She jes' nebber would heah to dat, I'm sho."

Fletcher looked disappointed, and said: "Why, what's the matter with coons, Uncle Si? I'm sure you love to hunt them and eat them too."

"Dat's so, chile; but hit's one propersishun t' ketch a warmint an' eat 'im up t' git 'im out-en hes meanness, an' ernudder t' take 'im inter de buzzum ob yer fambly; ain' dat er fack?"

"But, Uncle Si, what meanness does the coon do?"

"Why, honey! ye'd better ax what meanness he doan do. Dere ain' nuffin on de face ob de yarth dat er coon won't eat. Atter he done tuk er square meal offen frogs an' mices, he fool erroun' an' eat up er lot ob little birds and dere nestes. Den he prance ober t' master's roassen-yeah patch an' 'stroy enough t' feed er hawg."

“In short, he is omniverous, is he, Uncle Si?” queried the Professor, who had quietly entered the group.

Uncle Si blushed under his blackness and answered: “I doan know, sir, what sort o’ ’niverous he am; I jes’ know he am de mos’ stuffinest warmint in de woods. He ’minds me o’ some dahkies I knows. Dey dress up an’ call deyself ‘Mister Smif’ an’ ‘Mister Brown;’ and law, honey! dey wouldn’t look tode er chicken roos’! An’ de coon, he spraid dat bushy tail, and call heself ‘Mister Raccoon;’ but, chile, when daylite gone yer better lock dat hen’ouse do’; else yer gwine er heah dem ol’ hens go, ‘Squawk!’ An’ I ain’ gwinter say whedder Mr. Raccoon er dat two-legged coon done de debilment. Now yer’ll hatter ax de Puffesser ’bout de skyentifical part of de coon; dat ain’ in my line.”

MR. RACCOON FROM A "SKYENTIFICAL" POINT OF VIEW.

THE Professor was lounging under the trees during the heat of a July day. Beside him lay a book on natural history, at which he occasionally glanced; but the day was better suited to idleness and pleasant dreaming than to scientific research. By and by Fletcher came out and threw himself on the ground near by, exclaiming, "O, how lonesome I am! I do wish papa and mamma would come home from the springs, and never leave me again."

The Professor raised himself on his elbow and suggested: "Would not this be a good time to find out something more about Mr. Raccoon than Uncle Si could tell?"

"Indeed it would," exclaimed Fletcher, springing up to a listening posture. "Tell me his *habitat* first."

Little Boy had learned a few of what Uncle Si termed "skyentifical" terms, and was very fond of airing them, especially for the benefit of the Professor.

"Well," began the Professor, smiling, "the raccoon is found from Alaska to Central America, and belongs to the same family as weasels, badgers, and bears. They are all hibernating

animals. I wonder if you remember what I told you about hibernating animals?"

"O yes," was the prompt reply; "they go into their nests or dens and stay all winter."

"Very good," said the Professor. "Well, Mr. Raccoon goes into his nest rather early, and does not come out until pleasant weather."

"Where does he sleep at night?" Fletcher asked.

"I doubt whether he sleeps much at night, as he is what we call nocturnal in his habits—hiding in his nest during the day and going out at night in search of food. I never saw but one raccoon in the daytime, and that was a very cloudy day. It was about the size of the badger, and was certainly an ugly creature with its clumsy, thick-set body, its coarse grayish-brown hair and bushy white-and-black ringed tail. I wonder that you should fancy such a bundle of ugliness for a pet."

"Boys, don't choose their pets for beauty," said Fletcher wisely. "But you have not told me where raccoons make their nests." I wonder that I have never found one."

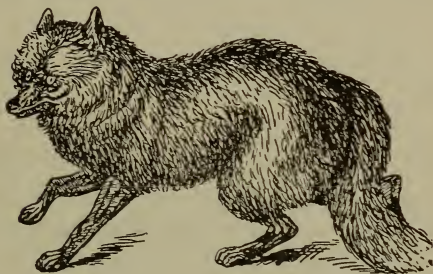
"O, they are pretty sly about that," was the reply. "They usually burrow far into a hollow tree, and are hard to find. They are good swimmers and do not mind crossing a river, especially if it should be to get a nice fat pullet

for their young, which the mother keeps with her for a year."

"Well," said Fletcher as the Professor arose in answer to the supper bell, "coons are very nice animals; and the more I hear about them, the more I wish mamma would let me buy one for a pet."

WHY A FOX WOULD NOT DO.

“It seems as if I will never get to spend my dollar,” said Fletcher rather disconsolately, as he and Uncle Si rode along in the spring wagon on their way to the old-fashioned water mill, where



THE FOX.

Mr. Beaumont insisted on having his corn ground. The things that I want mamma and papa say are not proper, and the things they call proper a boy just wouldn't look at. How would a fox do for a pet? I know of a feller that has one to sell.”

“Bless de chile!” ejaculated Uncle Si, almost dropping the reins in his astonishment. “Why doan he go an' git er scorpung or er rattlesnaik t' pet? Peahs lak dis wah done tuhn hes haid,

an' he doan keer nothin' 'tall 'bout peacerbul varmint.

"Well, what's the matter with a fox?" persisted Fletcher, determined to make Uncle Si give a reason for "the faith that was in him."

"What's de matter wid 'im? Why, honey, dere's ebbert'ing de matter wid him! In de fus' place, he am er bawn rogue; an' yer kno' ol' mas' ain' gwine tol'rate no rogues on dis plantation. He jes' fur all de worl' lak sum dahkies I knows: he's wittels doan peah ter hab no rallish lessen he steal 'em."

"What does he steal?" asked Fletcher, giving old Bonnie a sharp cut with the whip.

"Law, chile! he steal whatsumebber dat ol' long nose o' hisn kin smell, fum er rat t' a tuk-key gobbler. I min' when our fambly [Uncle Si felt that he was as much a member of the family as any of them] fus' cum t' Tennessee fum ol' Firginny, mistis couldn't raise no chickens skasely fur de foxes; but de folks don' chase 'em tel dey kinder jubous 'bout comin' roun'. I kin rickolleck when dey howl erroun' uv er night tel er body jes' pintedly could'n' sleep.

"Is a fox easy to tame, Uncl Si?"

"No'n 'deed! dey nebber is tamed t' 'mount t' nuffin. Dat's what make me doan bleebe what dese skyentifical folks say 'bout foxes an' dawgs bein' fum de same stock. You feed er dawg,

an' he gwine lub yer lak he lubs hes life; yer feed er fox, an' de berry bes' he kin do is to keep dem ol' sha'p teef fum bitin' yer. He ain' got no mo' 'fection 'bout 'im dan er wiper. He am cunnin', an' kno' how t' look atter hes own hide, an' dat's de bes' yer kin say 'bout 'im."

"Uncle Si," continued Fletcher, "I read the other day that folks used to pay their taxes in fox skins. I don't believe that."

"Law, yes, chile!" said Uncle Si, chuckling at his own superior knowledge; "dat am de gospul troof. Dat wer' kinder befo' my day, but many's de t'ime I'se hearn my daddy tell 'bout dribin' de teams t' Richmon' town loaded wid coon skins an' fox skins an' de lak fur t' pay de taxes."

FLETCHER'S MOLE HUNT.

MRS. BEAUMONT had given Fletcher a small plot of ground in one corner of the yard, and this he called his "flower garden. He had quite a knack at planting and transplanting; indeed, according to Uncle Si, "hit doan mek' no diffunce 'tall which eend dat chile put in de groun', dem plants gwinter grow; kase he's got de knack—he git *dat* fum *me*."

Fletcher worked early and late amongst his



THE MOLE.

flowers, and they were the pride of his heart. One morning he rose early to take a peep at some beautiful beds which he and Uncle Si had carefully raked and laid out in all sorts of pretty designs and planted with his choicest seeds the day before. Imagine his consternation when he beheld his crosses and diamonds and crescents, and even his name, "Charles Fletcher Beaumont," all torn to pieces and burrowed into

by little bolsterlike ridges in every direction. His shouts to Uncle Si soon brought the old man from his cabin, but before he reached the flower garden he espied the devastation and grunted: "Umph! dat some o' Mas' Mole's pranks. He done ruin my lettis bed, an' now he t'ink he gwine try he's han' on de white folks' truck."

"O, Uncle Si, what *is* the matter with my beautiful flower beds?" cried Fletcher almost in tears. "What could have done it?"

"Dat am er mole, honey, an' dis niggah gwinter git 'im befo' he's much older."

So Uncle Si got down on his knees and slowly followed all the little ridges with his hand, until at last he stopped short and pressed very hard, exclaiming: "I'se got 'im! Bring me de trow'l, quick."

He dug into the ridge, and soon unearthed such a queer-looking little animal that Fletcher almost forgot his ruined flower beds in examining it. It was about six inches long, with cylinder-shaped body and a cone-shaped head which ended in a long, tough nose. This nose was its boring instrument. Its eyes were so small that they scarcely looked like eyes at all, and you would have said it had no ears whatever. But, indeed, its sense of hearing and of smell are very acute.

"What beautiful fur!" exclaimed Fletcher,

passing his hand gently over its black, silky body.

“Yes, ’ndeed,” said Uncle Si; “I done heah mistis say de mole skin mak’ lubly furs, but dey sech leetle teensy t’ings hit tek’ so many of ’em t’ do enny good.”

When Fletcher carried the captive mole into the house the Professor told him that the little animal did not mean to destroy his flower beds, but was in search of earthworms, on which it principally subsists. He put the small prisoner in a bird cage, and fed it industriously on worms. But it pined in captivity, and soon died. Then he stuffed it and proudly added it to his “collection.”

MONKEYS AND APES.

ONE evening as the family were seated out in the front yard, enjoying the last rays of the November sun as it sunk behind the mountains, a



MONKEY CARRYING HER YOUNG.

queer little man came up carrying a hand organ, and with a grotesquely dressed monkey perched upon his shoulder. Both man and monkey doffed their hats and made a deep obeisance to Mrs. Beaumont, and the man said: "Goot ladee, you gif me one bed, some supper, an' I play you shweet

music an' show you all Banquo tricks." Just then Uncle Si peered around the corner of the house to see what visitors had come, and Mrs. Beaumont told him to take the man and the monkey around to the kitchen and see that they had their supper.

Banquo seemed to understand the order, for



APE.

as the trio started around the house he bounced down from his master's shoulder, and with lightning swiftness landed on that of Uncle Si, who received him with a regular Comanche yell, as he cried out: "Gway fum heah! gway fum heah! Yer looks fur all de worl' lak my ol'

grandaddy what kum fum Aferky, an' I do bleeb yer's he's hant!"

Uncle Si fled to his cabin, and Fletcher escorted the man and the monkey to the kitchen. When he returned to the group on the veranda he said: "Professor, are apes, monkeys, and baboons all the same?"

"Yes; by many naturalists the term 'ape' includes monkeys, gorillas, baboons, chimpanzees, and, in short, the whole family of creatures whose structure is so startlingly like man's."

"What is the difference between monkeys and apes?" asked Mrs. Beaumont. "I never did exactly know."

"The most marked difference is the tail," answered the Professor. "Apes have no tail whatever, baboons have short tails, and monkeys have, like our visitor Banquo, very long tails. Of all the monkey tribe, gorillas and chimpanzees are most like man; but the gorilla is fierce and ferocious, while the chimpanzee is lively and inclined to make friends."

"Do gorillas and chimpanzees walk upright like man?" asked Fletcher.

"They can do so, but frequently they go back to their quadrupedal style of walking. With their big, ungainly bodies and long arms it is astonishing with what ease they transport themselves from limb to limb and from tree to tree."

“How many kinds of monkeys are there?” asked Fletcher.

“Ah, it would be difficult to count the various families and subfamilies, with their numerous branches. For instance, among the manlike monkeys we find gorillas, chimpanzees, and orang-outangs—all with so many human ways that it would almost seem that they are akin to us, after all. The orang-outang is found only in the islands of Borneo and Sumatra, while, as you know, chimpanzees and gorillas come from Africa.”

“Then they *may* be akin to Uncle Si’s ‘granddaddy,’ who knows?” said Fletcher laughingly, as they parted for the night, with the promise from the Professor that they would come back to the subject at some other time.

MRS. RAT'S COMPLAINT.

"I'm er gwinter git me er box o' 'Rough on Rats' ez shore ez preachin,'" grumbled Uncle Si one Sunday morning as he took down his cher-



RAT.

ished beaver hat, in which he had expected to shine resplendent at the "Qua't'ly Confunce." But lo! through the very heart of it Mrs. Rat had gnawed a nice little door, and there deposited five hairless, sightless, and O such ugly baby rats!

That night after Uncle Si had gone to sleep, forgetful of the ruined beaver, Mr. and Mrs. Rat held a consultation in the wood shed.

"Yes, that is what we hear," began the irate rodent, "whenever we find a cozy home we are threatened with 'Rough on Rats!' 'Rough on Rats!' As if the whole world were not rough on rats! If things go on this way, there won't be a spot where a rat can gnaw out an honest living."

"You are quite right, my dear," exclaimed

Mrs. Rat. "I have often regretted that our ancestors ever left Asia"—

"You mean Europe, my love," mildly suggested Mr. Rat.

"No, I don't mean Europe, either; I mean Asia; and I hope, Mr. Rat, you won't undertake to correct me in the genealogy of our family. Let me inform you that the rat family was known and respected in Asia long before it was heard of in Europe. From Asia it did spread into Europe and from Europe into America."

"We are certainly a very ancient and very honorable family," said Mr. Rat, who would never dispute a point with his better half. I was reading yesterday in our family history that there are no less than two hundred and fifty well-established branches of the *Muridæ*, or rat family."

"Yes, that is something to be thankful for," assented the spouse, somewhat mollified; "but I also read in one of those horrid books—encyclopedias, I think they call them—that 'the rat is a great pest wherever it takes up its abode.' And that is just it—we are looked upon as a pest, with no rights whatever. If by honest gnawing we get into a granary and help ourselves to a little wheat or corn, all the cats in Christendom will know it the next morning."

“But think, my dear,” pursued Mr. Rat, bent on peace, “think of our elegant relations. Squire Beaver, you know, is our first cousin, and so are those lovely little white mice, while that courtly Sir Wharf Rat is”—

“I hope you won’t mention him!” indignantly broke in his wife. “He is a regular thief and marauder, and hasn’t a friend on earth. I would even rather claim kin with poor little Cousin Jemima Mouse, who is respectable and is always found in genteel company. But there is one consolation in all our troubles: we have four sharp teeth to earn a living with and four swift legs to carry us out of trouble, so”—

Just then Uncle Si’s big cat Mims made a frantic dive into the wood shed, and this estimable but not appreciated couple had need of their swift legs to make good their escape.

The next day Uncle Si bought the “Rough on Rats,” but the interlopers had concluded to move.

THE WEASEL.

“UMPH! umph! umph!” grunted Uncle Si as he opened his little henhouse one morning and gazed disconsolately within. “I knowed when I heah dat ol’ hen er crowin’ yistiddy dat she gwinter happen ter sum bad luck, an’ jes’ look er dar.”

No wonder the old ducky was sorrow-



THE WEASEL.

stricken; for there on the floor, with their throats cut, lay his thirteen little Plymouth Rock chickens that he had cherished with so much tenderness. Not one of them had escaped, and the poor mother hen stood over the lifeless group clucking and calling to them in a piteous manner.

“What in the world could have done it?” asked Fletcher, approaching just at that moment.

“Well, honey, hit mout er bin er polecat, but it want, kase we doan smell ’im; an’ hit mout er bin warious critters; but I’s ez shore ez preachin’ dat hit’s de same ol’ weasel what’s bin er suckin’ ol’ mis’ aigs. Ternight I gwinter *lay* fur ’im, an’ I ’low he won’ cut nary nudder chicken’s froat.”

So Uncl Si spent most of the day in oiling, burnishing, and loading his venerable flintlock gun; and to have witnessed his preparations you would have thought he was going to fight the entire Spanish army.

Fletcher begged to be allowed to share his vigil; and his mother consented with considerable reluctance, for she feared that the old flintlock might do more harm to Fletcher or Uncle Si than to the enemies of their poultry.

When the time came for Fletcher’s lessons the Professor soon discovered that his pupil’s mind was not on the text-books. He finally divulged his and Uncle Si’s plans for the night, and the Professor thought it a fitting time to give him some points about the weasel.

Said the Professor: “The weasel belongs to a family which some naturalists call martens; and all the animals of this family are distinguished by a strong, pungent odor. Sables, otters, badgers, skunks, polecats, and weasels all belong to this class; and, because their bod-

ies are shaped like a worm, they are called 'vermiform.' The weasel is the smallest member of its family, and it is really a pretty little creature if one could lose sight of its wickedness. Its soft coat of fur is of a reddish-brown above, and the underparts of the body are pure white. In very cold regions the weasel turns completely white."

"How large is a weasel?" asked Fletcher; "as big as a coon?"

"No, indeed," said the Professor; "the body of the male, without the tail, is only eight or ten inches, and the female is smaller. But it is bold and bloodthirsty, and, instead of being content to kill just what it can eat, it will kill a great deal more, just for the love of murder, I suppose."

"Like it did Uncle Si's chickens," said Fletcher, indignantly. "How does it kill things?"

"It gives one quick thrust with its sharp teeth on the back of the head, piercing the most delicate part of the brain."

FLETCHER'S PONY.

"UNCLE STUART is coming! Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted Fletcher, brandishing a letter as he entered his mother's room.

"Uncle Stuart" was a wealthy bachelor uncle who lived in San Francisco, and his annual visits were a perpetual picnic to Fletcher. Les-



THE SHETLAND PONY.

sons were suspended, or were made so light that they were little more than play—and everything and everybody put on a festive air, for "Uncle Stuart" was Mrs. Beaumont's only brother and the idol of them all.

Perhaps Fletcher's joy was intensified by these words at the bottom of the letter: "Tell my nephew to have his bridle and saddle ready, for I shall bring him a pony."

"A pony! to be my very own, and nobody else to boss it!" If Fletcher had put his very brightest dreams into tangible shape, that is about how he would have expressed it. Now, like the boys in fairy stories, his dream was about to come true, only it was no fairy prince, but a loving, living uncle who was to bring his great happiness to pass.

"I wonder what sort of a pony it will be," said Fletcher as they sat in family council out in the veranda.

"Not a mustang, I hope," commented Mrs. Beaumont with motherly solicitude.

"Why not a mustang?" questioned Fletcher, who loved danger like a foxhound loves a race.

"Because," answered his father, "of all vexatious, unreliable, tantalizing creatures, the mustang is the worst. To-day he is a saint, to-morrow he is a veritable imp of Satan; and the trouble about him is that you never know, when you start out with him, which he is going to prove, saint or sinner. Yet, for a rough country and a wild life, there is nothing like the mustang."

"Were mustangs here when Columbus discovered America?" asked Fletcher.

"No, indeed, nor horses of any kind. The settlers soon imported horses, however; but, as there were no fences, they gradually strayed

away into the prairies and became wild. From these came the mustang."

"Are mustangs and Indian ponies the same thing, father?"

"Yes, and sometimes they are called Mexican ponies, too; but they are the same tough little mustangs of the West."

"How large are they?" asked Fletcher.

"Well, they will hardly average over thirteen hands high, rather light, with good legs and shoulders, and a sharp, strong back. Sure of foot, tough, and fleet, the mustang, the Indian, and the wild West seem just suited to each other. But, like the Indian, the mustang is hard to civilize and harder to *keep* civilized. I should not like to see my son on one, especially if he should take it into his head to exhibit his 'bucking' powers."

The pony question was here dropped, and Mrs. Beaumont was greatly relieved when, a few weeks later, "Uncle Stuart" came, and the pony proved to be, not the dreaded mustang, but a darling, dumpy little Shetland pony, fresh from his home in the Scottish isles. And from the dainty little mouth to the very tip of its long bushy tail Fletcher took it into his heart and loved it as if it were a human being.

UNCLE STUART'S TALK ABOUT THE BUFFALO.

WONDERFUL were the times that Fletcher had while Uncle Stuart tarried with them, and never did he weary of hearing about that marvellous new country where nuggets of gold are supposed to grow on trees and where everything is on a gigantic scale. They had talked about



THE BUFFALO.

gold digging, washing, etc., and Fletcher had plied his uncle with questions until it would have seemed that his catechetical powers were exhausted. But, as Uncle Si said, “when dat boy kan’t ax no mo’ questshuns, yer bettah shet up de book.”

“There is just one thing more I want you
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to tell me, Uncle Stuart," continued the young inquisitor. "Did you ever see a buffalo?"

"Yes, indeed," was the smiling reply. "I have seen herds of them, but that was when I first went to live in the West. Once, when the Pacific railroad was first put in operation, I was on the train, and such a herd of buffaloes got on the track that the cars had to be stopped. But nothing of that kind is seen now, for, like the poor Indian, the buffalo retreats before the white man and civilization."

"Now tell me, Uncle Stuart, *is* there any difference between the buffalo and the bison? I say they are the same thing, but Charlie Simms says they are not."

"You are right this time. A buffalo and a bison are one and the same."

"What do they look like?"

"Well, more like our common ox than anything with which you are familiar, yet larger and more powerfully built. The forehead and neck are covered with dark-brown hair, long and shaggy. The European bison sheds his mane in the summer; but the American bison's mane is permanent, and the massive head and neck, with the hump on the shoulders, give him a formidable appearance. 'Why do not people tame and work them?' you ask. Efforts have been made in that direction, but without suc-

cess. One thing which will always prevent the buffalo from becoming popular as a beast of burden, even if he could be tamed, is the fact that, no matter how heavily laden, when he crosses water he will lie down and wallow. This, you see, would be rather trying both upon his rider and his cargo. But as an article of food the buffalo is not to be despised. The meat is as good as the finest beef; and, indeed, what our tame cattle are to us the buffalo was to the Indian in the days when the Indian and the buffalo could roam with equal freedom over the wide-sweeping prairies. But, in spite of his fierce looks, the buffalo is timid in the presence of man, unless wounded, and then he is an enemy the bravest man might well dread. When I go home I mean to send you a beautiful buffalo robe for that pony cart you are to have one of these days."

THE DOG FAMILY.

“WELL, Fletcher,” said the Professor, as they resumed their lessons the 1st of September, “I see we have come to the subject of dogs in our text-book. How would you like to spend the hour to-day in talking about dogs in general, and then we can take up the different species?”

“I should like that,” was the reply; and I want you to tell me first whether Noah took any dogs into the ark with him.

“I cannot tell you as to that,” the Professor said; “but I will say that in what we call pre-historic ages dogs were found. This is proved by their skeletons deposited in the earth. In historic times we find figures of the dog on Egyptian monuments from three to five thousand years old.”

“Yes,” broke in Fletcher, eager to display his knowledge, “don’t you remember that my mythology says that the Egyptians worshiped dogs and often embalmed them?”

“I am glad to see that you remember what you learn,” said the Professor. “The ancient Greeks and Romans also held dogs in high esteem, and used them in their many wars. But dogs have various uses in various countries; for instance, how would you like to be served with a dish of dog steak?”

“Ugh!” exclaimed Fletcher, with a look of ineffable disgust.

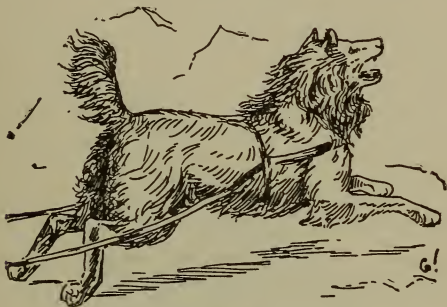
“And yet,” continued the Professor, “there are countries—China, for instance—where dogs are eaten, and when used for this purpose they are usually fed upon vegetables instead of flesh, which is their natural food.”

“I should like to know,” mused Fletcher, “whether dogs were always dogs, or whether they are like cats, akin to all sorts of animals?”

“Mr. Darwin says—and you know we have no better authority than he—that it is likely that our domestic dog is descended from various species of wolves, jackals, and perhaps other extinct canine species. So you see the dog would have as much trouble in getting up his family tree as some of our American aristocracy. But I think, of all the animals, our greatest friends are the dogs. They are more devoted, more faithful even, than the horse, and that is saying a great deal. They seem to have nearly every feeling that man has; they have often been known to die of grief, and I had a dog once that refused to eat and fell away to a mere skeleton because I brought another dog into the family—jealous, you see! But our time is up, now, and we will leave the various species of dogs to another day.”

WOLF DOGS.

“WHEN you remember that there are over one hundred and eighty-nine varieties of domestic dogs,” began the Professor, “you will see that it is not easy to select the most interesting and important. But the most of these may be



THE ESKIMO DOG.

arranged under the heads of wolf dogs, greyhounds, spaniels, hounds, mastiffs, terriers. Do you remember the picture in your geography of the Eskimo dogs?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Fletcher.

“Well,” continued the Professor, “these dogs are admirable creatures in spite of the cruel treatment they nearly always receive. In the frozen regions of North America it is hard to imagine what man would do without them.

The Eskimo dog is about the size of a mastiff, with a bushy tail, and is black-and-white in color. Dr. Kane, the noted Arctic explorer, tells how a number of them carried him and a well-laden sleigh between seven and eight hundred miles in two weeks, an average of about fifty-seven miles a day."

"They beat horses," said Fletcher.

"No horse could find a footing in that snow-



THE SHEPHERD DOG.

covered land; and here, as in all else, is shown the wisdom of God. Fleet-footed and unwearyed, light and active, these Eskimo dogs seem worthy of a better life; for it is said that they are treated with the greatest cruelty by their masters. On that account they are wild, savage,

and obstinate, and their owners are always careful to place a good dog as leader in the team. If not under the control of man, they soon go back into a wild state and become ferocious and unmanageable. Leaving the Eskimo dog, we will next come to the shepherd dog."

"Is that what you call a collie?" asked Fletcher

"Yes, the Scotch collie is one variety of shepherd dog; but there are others also. In Oriental countries, where the dog's chief task is to protect the herds from wild beasts and robbers, the shepherd dog is a powerful creature, as large as the Newfoundland; its ears are erect, its nose pointed—everything about it shows strength and power."

"Father used to have a Scotch collie to bring home the cows," said Fletcher, but she was not more than half so large as our big Newfoundland."

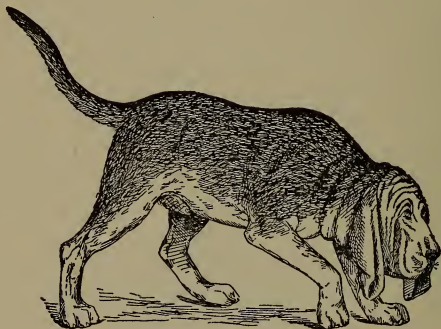
"You are correct: the Scotch collie is much smaller than the Newfoundland, but for intelligence almost human I do not believe it has an equal. In the Highlands of Scotland, where the land is fit only for grazing purposes, one of these dogs will do the work of a dozen men. They take the flocks to the hills, watch them as they graze, and bring them home at night, often without any aid whatever from the shepherd."

"Are all shepherd dogs black? Ours was."

"No, their long shaggy hair is sometimes entirely black; then you will see it varied with gray or brown."

THE BLOODHOUND.

“So yo’ lesson’s ’bout bloodhoun’s, am it, honey! Bless my soul, chile, effen I jes’ had de time, I could tell moh tales ’bout dem bloodhoun’s dan yer could forgit in er yeah.”



THE BUCCANEER (IMPORTED.)

“Do tell me about them, Uncle Si. It’s not time for lessons yet.”

“No, no, honey; I ’low I’d bettah tek up dese heah ashes an’ mek dis fiah, sose de room’ll be hot when de Puffesser come in. Some dese days I gwine tell yer how my brudder Ellick lub er free yaller gal an’ run off wid ’er kase hes ol’ mas’ wouldn’t let ’m buy hese’f, an’ how dey chase ’im inter de swamp wid dem awful

bloodhoun's, an—but hit's too long a tale fer dis time, fur heah comes de Puffesser, an' dis ol' nigger better tek hese'f off."

So saying, Uncle Si picked up his ash bucket and departed.

"Uncle Si is like all of the darkies," said the Professor, who had overheard the last part of the old man's talk. "Bloodhounds and runaway negroes are always connected in his mind. And no wonder, for in slave times these dogs were frequently used to capture runaways."

"Do bloodhounds look like other hounds?" asked Fletcher, for whom hounds had always possessed a peculiar fascination.

"Yes, all the varieties of hounds are more or less alike; they all have long ears, close hair, deep muzzle, and hunt not by sight but by scent. Many good authorities consider the bloodhound as the parent stock of all other hounds; but it is larger and more muscular than other hounds, and has a keener scent than any other dog that is known."

"How do they track people with bloodhounds?" queried the interested pupil. "I have never understood how they made the dog know who it was they wanted."

"That is easily done. Some garment that he has worn or article that the person to be captured has touched is shown to the dog, and when

once he has got the scent he cannot be turned from it by a hundred other scents."

"I think it is wonderful," said Fletcher. "Why do people keep bloodhounds?"

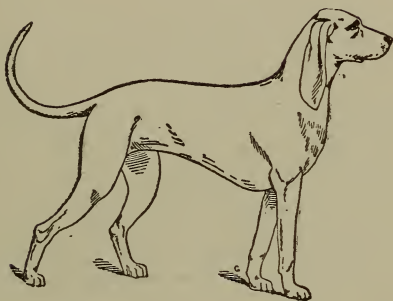
"Well, in olden times they were kept by warriors to pursue their enemies, and you will see a great deal about them when you come to read of the many little wars between Scotland and England. Wallace and Bruce and other noble men who fought for the freedom of their country were chased by these cruel pursuers. Then, later on, noblemen kept them to find out deer thieves; and still later they were used, as Uncle Si says, to hunt runaway slaves, both in the South and in other countries where slavery was admitted."

"But we have no slaves now," persisted Fletcher.

"No, but we still have wrongdoers, and bloodhounds are still kept by some men, mostly as a source of profit. They are kept at some penitentiaries, and woe to the fleeing convict upon whose track the bloodhounds are put!"

HUNTING DOGS.

“You don’t mean to say that my grandfather kept fifty hounds just for fun, do you, Uncle Si?”



THOROUGHbred FOXHOUND.

“In cose I does,” replied the old darky. “I done tole yer dat yo’ gran’pa wer’ er gentermun, an’ he keep dem dawgs t’ ’muse hisse’f and his fren’s. Dere wuz er yaller boy, Tony, dat didn’t do nuffin ’tall but ’ten’ t’ dem houn’s, an’ de cook she bake bread fur ’em jes lak she were er bakin’ bread fur Giner’l Lee’s army, an’ I tell yer it tuk mighty nigh ez much t’ do ’em. But law! law! dem good ole times is all gone; an’ ebber-body dese days is atter money;” and the old

man sighed as he went off to dig sweet potatoes for dinner.

“I want you to tell me about hunting dogs,” said Fletcher to the Professor when the natural history hour arrived. “Uncle Si says my grandfather kept fifty hounds. What use did he have for so many?”

“In the days of your grandfather,” answered the Professor, “there were great numbers of foxes, deer, and all sorts of game in this country, and gentlemen who could afford it kept large packs of dogs for hunting. There was the staghound, which has a scent almost as keen as the bloodhound. But the fleetest and most popular hound is the foxhound, and in England this dog has been brought to the greatest degree of perfection. Of course we see all sorts of mongrels called hounds, but the pure-bred foxhound is a beautiful dog, from twenty to twenty-two inches high at the shoulders, with smooth white hair clouded with black and tan.

“‘How long can a foxhound run?’ you ask. The longest run that I remember is ten hours at a stretch, and a tough foxhound will wear out two or three horses sometimes. A mile in two minutes is not at all uncommon when the hound is flushed with the chase.”

“I have seen a good deal about beagles and harriers in storybooks,” said Fletcher. “Are they hunting dogs too?”

“Yes. The harrier, as you might judge from the name, is a small hound used for hunting hares, and is more common in England than in America; and the beagle is still smaller than the harrier, being, indeed, the smallest hunting dog known.”

“You don’t see many hounds now,” said Fletcher. “Is that because the foxes and deer are nearly all killed?”



THOROUGHbred POINTER.

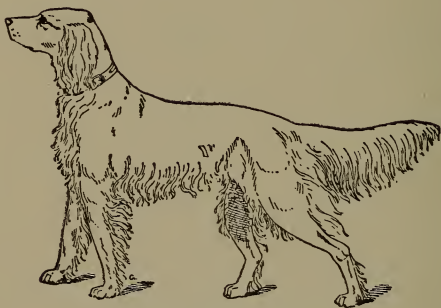
“That is it exactly; the game to be hunted with hounds becomes more and more scarce every year. The few packs of hounds among us are kept by gentlemen of leisure who can afford to spend time and money for their own amusement. But in England, where the game laws are very strict and where one landlord sometimes owns many thousands of acres, and even whole counties, hounds are kept and trained to great perfection.”

“When Mr. Floyd came out to see father and to hunt last winter he had two beautiful dogs. One was a pointer, and the other a setter. Don’t

you think they were prettier than these long-eared hounds?"

"I certainly do," assented the Professor. "Indeed, few dogs are so handsome or so intelligent as a fine setter. They belong to the spaniel family. What color was Mr. Floyd's setter?"

"It was pure white, with large liver-colored spots."



THOROUGHbred SETTER.

"Yes, that is the true setter color, but I have seen some very fine dogs that were a reddish brown. Do you know why these dogs are called 'setters?'"

"Is it because they stop suddenly and crouch down when they see their game?"

"That is it—just as the pointer gets his name from his habit of pointing. The pointer is thought to be a species of hound, and both pointers and setters are used by sportsmen in bird-hunting, but rarely for other game."

THE NEWFOUNDLAND.

“OB all de high-toned dawgs, de dawgs which am moh lak folkes dan dawgs, de Newfoun’lan’ he am de boss,” said Uncle Si as he and Fletcher amused themselves, one rainy Saturday, looking



PRINCE.

over the pictures in a book of natural history. “When weuns libed in Firginny, ol’ mas’ had de fines’ one named Prince. I tell yer, chile, dat dog were jes ez much ob er human ez me ’n’ you. Dere wan’t a single low-down t’ing ’bout Prince, an’ he were brave ez er lion. Effen ye leab sumpin’ by ’im an’ say, ‘Watch dat, Prince,’ he gwin’er die befo’ he let ennerbody bodder it. But effen yer tendin’ t’ yer own bizness, and let

hissen 'lone, dere nebber were er moh peaceabel-ler ner yit er moh fr'en'lier dawg dan Prince. He jes' lak ol' mas'—he ain' gwine fight lessen sumbody step on his toes, an' den yer bettah look out, man."

"What color was Prince, Uncle Si?" asked Fletcher, who was never so happy as when he could get the old man started on some memory of the past.

"He were black an' white jes' 'bout ekally diwided, an' yer ain' nebber seed no 'oman wid moh curlier, silkier ha'r dan Prince, an' he were mighty nigh three feet tall. 'Kin de Newfoun'-lan' swim?' did yes say? Law, honey, he am er reg'lar duck in de wattah; an' effen yer'll 'zamine dere feet yer'll fin' dey is got webs. Lemme tell yer what happen one day, not long atter we got Prince. Ol' mas' had ernudder dawg, a great big yallerish mastiff named Nero. At dat time we libed on de James Ribber, an' dere were er bridge acrost hit not fur fum de house. Well, one day Prince he stood on dat bridge er gnawin' er bone, when Nero ma'ch up an' pitch inter 'im. Nero couldn' nebber indure de sight o' Prince, kase Nero were dere fust, an' he awful jealyous ob de new dawg; so he were alluz huntin' skuces ter fight. But when he bounce Prince dis time an' try t' take dat bone, I lay dere wuz a fight wuf seein'! Dey roll an'

dey fit tell finally dey clinch each udder an' roll smack dab inter de ribber. Yer bettah bleeb ol' Nero he let loose den! De Newfoun'lan' didn' no mo' min' dat ribber dan dat duck yander min' de puddles, but Nero couldn' no mo' swim dan er kitten wid a rock tied t' hits neck. Prince lite out fur de lan' and lef' ol' Nero splashin' an' sputterin' erroun'. By de time Prince got t' de bank Nero wuz mighty nigh pas' goin'. Prince stood on de bank an' gaze at 'im er flounderin' 'roun' in de ribber, an'—would you bleeb it?—dat Christian dawg he jump back inter de ribber an' swims to Nero, grabs 'im by de collah, and brings him out, jes' lak yer is seen one boat bring ernudder boat out! Now dat's er fack, honey, an' atter dat ye neber is seed one dawg lub ernudder dawg lak Nero lub Prince."

A PRAIRIE DOG TOWN.

“ONE of the queerest sights to be found in our wonderful West, where one sees so much that is strange and interesting,” said Uncle Stu-



THE PRAIRIE DOG.

art as he and Fletcher walked by the riverside one day, “is a prairie dog town. Did you ever see the picture of one?”

"No, sir, I never did; but I should certainly like to. Where do prairie dogs come from?"

"They are found in the prairies east of the Rocky Mountains and also in Europe, but I speak of the American species. I remember that when I first traveled through the West I saw a collection of queer little mounds dotted about in village fashion, and I asked a friend if they were Indian mounds. He laughed at me, and replied, 'No, indeed; that is a prairie dog town;' and I was so much interested that I stopped and examined it carefully. On the prairies where the buffalo grass grows tall great numbers of prairie dogs will collect and decide upon a settlement. You would never guess, to see the little earth mounds, that they extend twelve or fourteen feet under the ground, and here these strange little mound builders live. They must be something like people in their tastes; for there are paths running from one burrow to another, so that, like the rest of us, they can go calling upon their neighbors."

"Do they stay down in those burrows all the time?" asked Fletcher.

"No, indeed; each burrow has its watchtower, which is made by throwing up the earth in a mound at the entrance of the burrow. One of the funniest sights imaginable is when hundreds

of these little animals mount their towers and bask in the sunlight or play about as they prefer. But let one of them utter the queer barking sound that alone causes them to be called 'dogs,' and away they all scamper into their holes, for they know that danger is near."

"Do they look like dogs, uncle?"

"Not at all; and they are not dogs—do not even belong to the canine family. Their scientific name is marmot, and they belong to the great squirrel family."

"What do they eat?" was the listener's next question.

"They live mainly on the prairie grass and its roots. There is one peculiar thing about these prairie dogs that I must tell you: wherever you find them you find great numbers of owls and rattlesnakes."

"Do they like each other?"

"One would suppose so from the fact of their living together. But those who have studied the matter say that this close communion is anything but peaceful. The rattlesnake likes to utilize the burroughs of the prairie dog as a residence, and he also considers young prairie dogs a very great delicacy. I do not know why the owl chooses these burrows for a home, unless it be his well-known fondness for gloomy places. Perhaps you had better ask Uncle Si about that, as he is authority on these birds of evil omen."

WEARING THE ERMINE.

THE boys were all getting their overcoats, and it was quite a fad with them to have them trimmed with fur. So Fletcher raised the question as to what sort of fur would be "the thing." His mother laughed outright when he



THE ERMINE.

said: "Why not have my overcoat trimmed with ermine? Is not that a nice fur?"

"It is a very nice fur, but I don't believe you would consider it the proper thing for a boy's overcoat. How did you happen to think of ermine?"

"Well, I have read about 'wearing the ermine,' and all that, and I thought it must be rather a 'swell' fur, or you would not see so much about it."

"You did not know that a long time ago, in the reign of Edward III., no one but members of the royal family were permitted to wear ermine."

"They were not? Well, I'd like to see anybody say I should not wear whatever I chose to if I had the money to pay for it!" exclaimed Fletcher, with true American pluck.

His mother smiled and said: "Of course you feel that way about it now; but perhaps if you had lived in those days, when people thought their king was next to their God, you would have thought differently. After the days of Edward ermine became a sort of badge of authority, and it now enters into nearly all state robes. Sometimes you can even judge of the rank and position of the wearer by the disposition of the black spots. But, if you think you would like to 'wear the ermine,' I shall show you some, that you may see how you would like to have your overcoat trimmed with it."

Mrs. Beaumont brought forth a muff and tip-pet, upon beholding which Fletcher's face was a picture of surprise. "Why," he exclaimed, "the stuff is white! Wouldn't the boys gey me if I should come out in that rig? Where does that fur come from, mother?"

"It is the fur of a little, long animal that belongs to the same family as the weasel. In all its habits, its food, shape, and manners, it is very much like our weasel. But the ermine is pure white in winter, except that the tip of its tail is jet-black."

"I remember all about it now, and I don't see how I could forget that white fur with the black spots."

"But the spots don't grow on the body; it is only the tail that is black. And this black fur is used by the furriers as an ornament to the pure white. But the ermine is not white in summer: it is reddish brown above, and white beneath its body."

"Does it shed its fur?" asked Fletcher.

"No, but it changes to white in winter. That is a great protection to it in Siberia and the snowy countries where ermine is mostly found. The hunters cannot see it so well as if it were dark-colored. But it does not shed its dark summer clothes for its winter coat of white: the dark ones appear only to bleach out. Here is the picture of an ermine. Does it not look snaky, with its long, slim body and short limbs? It is a fighter, too, and makes its living by murdering rats and other smaller animals. It fastens itself to the throat of its victim, and no amount of struggling will cause it to turn loose. It is so agile and bold that many people call it the 'stoat,' which means 'bold.' Indeed, it is generally called stoat during the summer, when it has on its dark clothes; and when it comes out in its snowy garb in winter people call it the ermine. And many persons think the stoat is a

different animal from the ermine. Do you think now that you would like to have your overcoat trimmed with ermine?"

"Not until I get to be a supreme judge," said Fletcher, laughing.

FLETCHER GOES "POSSUM-HUNTIN'."

CHRISTMAS day was near at hand. Pompous turkey cocks in the barnyard gobbled ominously, as if they knew Christmas was no friend to



POSSUM WITH HER YOUNG IN POUCH.

them. Uncle Si heard them, and chuckled inwardly. "Nebber yer min'," said he, "yer may talk 'bout yo' tukkeys an' yo' iyster stuffin'; but I knows er trick wuff two o' dat. Gimme er good fat possum, wid plenty o' sweet taters an' ash-cake walloped in de grabby, an' yer may keep all yo' tukkeys. Dat 'min's me I prommus dat chile we gwine possum-huntin' t'night, an' yander he

comes now. I lay he ain' gwine disremember *dat*."

"Is ebber yer notice," said Uncle Si, as he and Fletcher and Snuff (Uncle Si's latest canine favorite) wended their way to the woods, "is ebber yer notice whar de ol' possum kyar her little uns?"

"Yes, indeed," said Fletcher; "she carries them in her pouch. That's because she belongs to the Marsupialia, or pouched animals, Uncle Si."

"I dunno nuffin 'bout yo' 'supyals,' said Uncle Si, with a somewhat disdainful sniff; "I jes' call 'em pouches, an' I ain' nebber seed no purtier sight dan er whole gang er little possums stickin' dere heads outen dat pouch. An' is yer ebber notice dat er possum use hits tail mos' ez much ez hits feet in climbin' trees? Sometimes when de little possums gits tired o' bein' shet up in dere mammy's pouch dey lite on 'er back, she fling up her tail, an' dey wrop dere little tails roun' hern an' ride 'long ez happy ez yer please."

"All possums do not have pouches, Uncle Si (so my natural history says), but the Virginia possum—that's ours—has. Then in Mexico there is a kind of possum no bigger than a mouse, and it is bright red in color. Then they have striped possums in Brazil."

"I dunno 'bout no sawt o' possum but dat big gray grizzly feller wid his long slick tail an' dem ol' claws o' hissen. Dat ol' gray possum, I tell yer, man, he's a bad un ter tackle, an' I's seen 'em fight when dey gits a good den in er holler lawg till dey just pintedly wear de dawgs out. Possums ain't no fren's to little chickens an' birds; dey'll suck dere blood, but dey doan eat de meat. But mos' gin'rally dey libs on bugs an' sich, an' when dey wants a little dessick dey takes de fruits an' berries and all sawts o' roots."

"Did you ever see a possum in town?" asked Fletcher.

"Law, no, chile. I 'lowed dey feared t' git inter de towns."

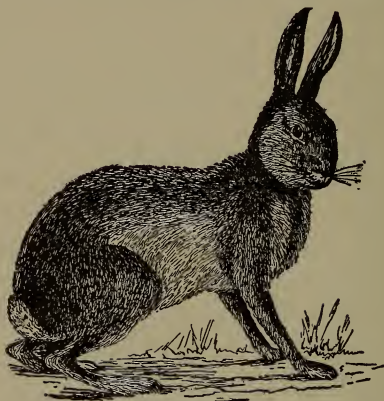
"I've often heard father tell about a couple of possums that came every night on the roof of his boarding house when he was in N—— in the Legislature. He said at first he thought they were cats, and threw things at them, but one bright moonlight night he found that they were possums. He says they would sit there for hours, and he never bothered them. I asked the Professor about it, and he said that possums were really good scavengers, and"—

Just then Snuff stopped short under an immense sweet gum tree and began to bark and go through all sorts of "monkey motions."

Uncle Si cried out in delight, "He's treed 'im!" and for the next half hour a single lone possum on the topmost branch was of more interest to Uncle Si and Fletcher than all the wisdom that the Professor could impart.

HARE AND RABBIT.

“INSTEAD of your regular lesson for next Monday,” said the Professor to Fletcher, as he



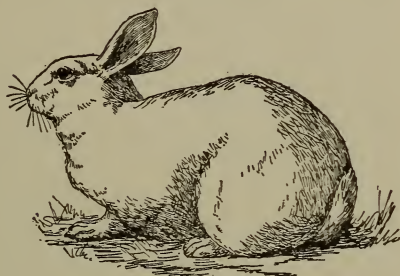
THE HARE.

closed his natural history one Friday evening, “I will let you make some investigation on your own account. As we have found out something about dogs, you may write a composition on the hare and the rabbit, showing their points of likeness and unlikeness.”

“Why I thought rabbits and hares were the same animals, and that hare was just a sort of dressed up, Sunday name for rabbit,” replied Fletcher.

“Yes, that, I believe, is the common idea; but you may look into the question between now and Monday, and give me the result.”

So Fletcher went to the library and examined



THE RABBIT.

a number of very wise-looking books, and this is the composition which he handed the Professor the next Monday morning:

“THE HARE AND THE RABBIT.

“Uncle Si has always told me that a hare was ‘nuffin’ but er rabbit wid er ‘ristercratical name stuck on to ‘im,’ but I find that Uncle Si and I have both been wrong on this point. While hares and rabbits belong to the same family of rodents, or gnawing animals, yet they are different in many respects.

“The hare is a larger animal than the rabbit, has a longer head, ears, and feet; but the rabbit has longer, sharper claws. The rabbit is a

clean, gray color, but the coat of the hare has a yellowish tinge, which sometimes changes in very cold climates to a pure white in winter. The rabbit has no black tip to its ears, as the hare always has. But the greatest difference in these animals is seen in their habits. The hare does not live in burrows, but makes a small depression in the ground which the hunters call its 'form,' and here it will lie so closely pressed to the earth that it can hardly be distinguished from the dried grass and leaves. The young of the hare are born with their eyes open and their bodies well covered with fur, but the poor little rabbits come into the world naked and blind. So the rabbit makes a little house for itself sometimes in the ground, sometimes in the trunk of a dead and fallen tree, and these houses we call 'burrows.' Here the mother takes care of the young rabbits until they are able to shift for themselves.

"Both rabbits and hares stay very close at home during the day, and go out at night for food, which is usually some sort of leaves or vegetables. I have heard farmers complain that rabbits injure their crops, and I know they ate Uncle Si's young cabbages this spring.

"Both rabbits and hares are timid and afraid of man, but are easily tamed, and 'tame rabbits' make lovely pets for girls, but I do not

think they are so interesting to boys as coons or foxes.

“Rabbits and hares are found in nearly all parts of the world, and there are from thirty-five to forty different species scattered over the globe.”

THE SHIP OF THE DESERT.

UNCLE SI had always been something of a student of natural history, in his simple, homely way, and his talks with Fletcher had greatly increased his fondness for such studies. He



THE BACTRIAN CAMEL.

would come into the schoolroom upon the pretext of “punchin’ up de fiah” and listen with rapt attention as the Professor talked to his pupils about the wonderful creatures in the world about us. The Professor loved to gratify the old darky’s curiosity, and encouraged him to ask questions.

One day Uncle Si set down his coal scuttle and glanced at the open book in Fletcher’s

hand. "Whatam de name o' dat or'nary-lookin' critter?" he asked, as the Professor looked up with an encouraging smile.

"That is a camel, Uncle Si."



ARABIAN CAMEL.

"Tell us about it, won't you?" interposed Fletcher.

"Am dey good ter eat?" asked Uncle Si, whose ideas of the value of an animal were greatly influenced by its edibility.

"I have never tasted it, but those who have tried it declare that the flesh of a young camel is as good as veal. Camel's milk is also sweet and nourishing, but it cannot be turned into butter."

“Whah yer fin’ dem cammils, Puffesser,” asked Uncle Si, as if he would like to purchase one.

“In Asia, a country far over the sea, the country where the things spoken of in the Bible happened. Don’t you remember about John the Baptist’s raiment of camel’s hair? That is the very same kind of animal that we are talking about. Camels have been known as long as the world has had a history.”

“But,” suggested Fletcher, “I see one of these camels has two humps on his back, and the other has only one.”

“Yes; the one with the single hump is the Arabian camel; the other, with two humps, is called the Bactrian camel. Some people call the one-humped camel the dromedary; but really the dromedary is nothing but a slenderer and a fleeter breed of camel. It will travel one hundred miles a day if necessary, while twenty-five miles is considered a very good day’s journey for a loaded camel.”

“What de good o’ dem cammils?” inquired Uncle Si. “Why doan dem Asher folks use hosses and mules, lak we does?”

“Well, Uncle Si, that is a very dry, sandy country, full of what we call deserts, where there is neither water nor anything green. Horses would soon die in the long, hot marches;

but God has given the camel a stomach full of cells where water can be stored away. These cells are something like the cells in a honeycomb, only, of course, much larger. Then the hump on the camel's back is nothing but roll upon roll of fat; and if he can get no food on the long, desert march, 'he lives on his fat,' as you would say about the possums and the coons. And the camel will thrive on bits of dry grass and shrubs which nothing else will eat; and, in addition, it can carry across the deserts such burdens as would stagger the stoutest pack mule that you ever saw."

"I dunno, sah, 'bout dat. Our ol' Pomp is mighty hard ter stagger," said Uncle Si, ambling off.

THE SLOTH.

THERE is a funny little animal in South America whose very name tells its habits; and, no matter if the poor little sloth should be very spry indeed, I fear its bad reputation would cling to it still. Like some people, it seems even too lazy to do any harm; and if it has enough to eat and a place to sleep, the sloth is about as happy as a sloth can ever be.

Among the noisy, chattering apes and monkeys of the South American forests the droning, slow-moving sloths creep around undisturbed and undisturbing. They are large as monkeys, with long, rather shaggy hair, a little, stumpy tail, and sharp, clinging claws. They cannot leap and play among the branches as do monkeys; their tails are too short to hang by. So when a sloth wants to take a journey of a few feet, which to it is a long way, it grasps the limbs of the tree with its sharp claws and creeps along as best it can. Sometimes a sloth will go to sleep hanging by its legs to the limb of a tree, and it will sleep that way for hours, seemingly unconscious of discomfort. Like the "fat boy" in the "Pickwick Papers," the sloth is ready in season and out of season to go to



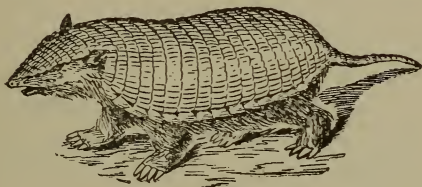
THE SLOTH.

sleep, and nothing but hunger ever seems to interfere with its slumbers. Of all animals, it is the most strictly arboreal—that is, lives more entirely in trees. Its limbs are of unequal length, and its feet formed so that it can rest only on the outer edge of them. Thus it is very hard for this animal to get over even a very few feet of level surface. Only think of traveling three yards an hour! Yet this is the very best the sloth can do when it ventures down from the branches to which it clings with its sharp, curving claws. But here, as in all else, the wisdom and kindness of God are shown. As this animal is not fitted to get for itself other food than the trees afford, it is a vegetarian, and thrives among the leafy branches, where a carnivorous animal would starve. But when kept in captivity it learns to eat other things, and seems to partake of bread and milk as contentedly as any girl or boy in the land.

There is one thing we should not forget about this quadruped sloth: it cannot get about any better than it does. But two-legged sloths, who have supple limbs and elastic muscles which they are too indolent to use—just what should be done with them is a problem I have not solved yet.

THE ARMADILLO.

“COUSIN SLOTH is right,” said the great armadillo as he gazed at his own image reflected in the clear water of a stream in South America. “I am not handsome; but I do think, for



THE ARMADILLO.

all that, I am a very wonderful animal, and deserve more notice than I get. Indeed, I think my family has many advantages over some others I could mention.” And the armadillo looked contemptuously up at a monkey that had just thrown a nut, which rattled against the armadillo’s bony case.

“Our family name is *Edentata*,” he went on, when he found the monkey was listening; “but I don’t care much about that, for it means *without teeth*, when the fact of the business is we have very good teeth—only the front teeth are wanting. But the others have no aching roots, and just grow on and on as fast as we wear

them out. Now, *isn't* that an advantage?" And the monkey, who had had a severe spell of toothache the week before, said he thought it was.

That put the armadillo in a good humor, and he went on quite proudly: "Then look at my fine claws, five of them on each foot, and you can't begin to tell how useful they are! With my long, tough snout and my strong claws I can get a living anywhere; for if no fruit nor insects are to be found, I can just grabble down to the roots of a tree or shrub and make a fine meal from that!"

"How about your going into the graves and eating the bodies of the dead?" asked the monkey with a little chuckle that the armadillo did not fancy.

"Who says that we do that?" he asked.

"I've heard travelers say so, and, the fact is, I'm rather fond of going to funerals myself, and I've seen them put double rows of planks around the grave deep in the ground, to keep the bodies from being scratched up by"—

"That's all a slander," broke in the armadillo; but he changed the subject so quickly that the monkey had his own ideas about the matter. "Just look at my fine coat of mail!" he exclaimed very briskly. "A bullet would rattle off that just like it would off a rock. I've a

cousin, the ball armadillo, and when he rolls himself up you would never suspect there was a living creature in his case."

"Why don't you come out and have a good time in the day, as I do?" asked the monkey. I notice you are rarely ever seen in the daylight, but prowl at night. My mammy says honest folks are never afraid of the day."

"I am not afraid of it either!" said the armadillo with spirit; but as a family we have rather small, weak eyes, and that's the reason we find it more pleasant to travel around at night. And there's another thing. These South Americans have found out that there is nothing nicer than a fat armadillo roasted in its shell, and that's another reason why our family have to keep themselves rather scarce in the daytime. Of course no one would eat a roasted monkey, so you have nothing to fear on that line." And with this parting shot the armadillo trotted off and disappeared in the dense Brazilian forest.

THE PORCUPINE.

“ATTER all, dere ain’ so much diffunce in humans an’ dumb brutes ez yer mout s’pose,” said Uncle Si meditatively. “Now dere’s ol’ Brud-



THE PORCUPINE.

der Pomp; he’s jes zackly lak er mule; ’deed, he done *ack* mulish tel he p’intedly *look* lak one. Den, ergin, dere’s Brudder Zeke; he am de berry pattern ob er pawkypine. Ebber time yer com’ er nigh ’im yer ’speekin’ dem quills to pop out, ready t’ stick in yer. Not dat I’s e ny objection to folks habin’ quills, but dey mus’n’ fetch ’em out ’pon *all* ’casions. Is yer ebber see er pawkypine, honey?” Uncle Si continued, as Fletcher entered and seated himself upon the foot of the old man’s bed.

"I've seen them in shows, but I was never very close to one. How large are they, Uncle Si?"

"'Bout so long," said Uncle Si, measuring about twenty-seven inches on his cane. "But hit ain't hes length nur yet hes bridth dat mak' de pawkypine so noterble. When yer light yer eye on 'im at er distunce yer say: 'Dat little feller 'pear lak he's civil ernuff.' But jes' wait er minnit tel yer gits 'er little closter, an' bless yo' bones, honey, dat critter dun spraid out an' stick out tell he look ez big ez de side o' de house. Why, man, I'se tuk some o' dem quills an' mejered 'em, an' effen dey wa'n't fifteen inches long dey wa'n't nary un! An' ter see dat little feller roll hisse'f inter er ball, wid de squills stickin' ebber way for Sunday, yer'd jes' erbout ez soon tackle er prickly pear ez Mas' Pawkypine. He libs in holes an' rocks, and burrers sort o' lak rabbits, an' all dat; an' he doan trabel roun much 'ceptin' at night. But law! here come de Puffesser, an' dis ol' niggah better hush hes gab."

"Not by any means, Uncle Si," said the Professor, who was out for a walk, and wanted Fletcher to join him. "I enjoy getting your ideas very much. You have taught me a great many things. Was it the porcupine that you and Fletcher were discussing?"

“Yes sah, dat am de gentermun.”

“Do either of you know that the word ‘porcupine’ comes from two French words meaning ‘spiny pig?’ They are what we call rodents, or gnawing animals, and are akin to rats, mice, squirrels, and many others. There are a good many varieties of porcupine, but the one most familiar to us is the common porcupine, which is a short, heavy-built animal with a stubby tail, and is covered with long hairs, nearly hiding its spines. What are called ‘Old World’ porcupines live entirely on the ground; but many ‘New World,’ or American, porcupines live in trees, and have long tails that look very much like the tails of monkeys. In South America there are eight or ten different varieties of tree porcupines, and some of them extend as far north as Mexico. If you will cut the quill of a porcupine, you will find that it is either hollow or is filled with a spongy tissue such as is called ‘pith.’”

THE LION.

“UNCLE SI, can you tell me anything about the lion?” asked Fletcher one morning as the



THE LION.

old darky gave the finishing touches to the schoolroom.

“Now yer done hopt erpas’ dis ol’ nigger, an’ yer knows hit berry well, littl’ mas’. When hit comes t’ possums and coons an’ sich I’s at home; but when yer gits ermong dem wil’ beastes yer’ll hatter ax some o’ de high-larnt folkes. I jes’ know dat de lion am alluz called de king o’ beastes. De Scriptor talk er heaps

'bout lions; but I 'low de Puffesser kin tell yer all yer want t' know and a sight more'n yer kin 'member, fur de Puffesser he am er walkin' bookshunery," with which tribute to the Professor's abilities Uncle Si gave the fire a poke and left for the more congenial realm of the kitchen.

"So we shall find out something about the 'king of beasts' to-day, shall we?" said the Professor with that genial manner which at once set his pupils at ease. "I have sometimes thought that the tiger might dispute this kingship, for he is sometimes even larger and more powerful than the lion."

"They belong to the same family, don't they?" asked Fletcher.

"Yes, the great family called *Felidæ*, from which comes our word 'feline.' The internal structure of all the *Felidæ*, from the monstrous lion to the tiny kitten, is very much the same. The lion is, above all other things, a beast of prey, and from his cruel claws to his sharp, strong teeth the object of his being would seem to be to seize and hold the weaker animals; and yet he does not usually attack his victims openly, but hides himself in a thicket near the spot where the weaker animals come to drink, and with one prodigious bound he pounces upon them."

"Are lions found only in Africa?" Fletcher asked.

"Besides in Africa, lions are found in Mesopotamia, in Persia, and even in some parts of India. Could we go back before the Christian era, we should find that lions ranged nearly all over the then known world; but so deadly is the enmity between him and man that so fast as a region is inhabited this king of the forest has been exterminated."

"Do they hate and try to kill other lions?"

"No; unless some rivalry among the males should arise, troops of lions will sometimes hunt together on terms of good fellowship. But if his anger is aroused, the lion is a relentless foe, and a male lion has been known to turn upon and devour his own mate when the carcass they had captured was not sufficient to satisfy his hunger."

"How contemptible!" exclaimed Fletcher.

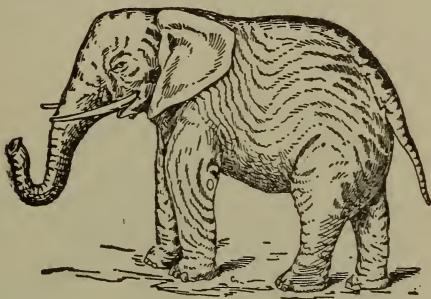
"Yes, decidedly so, and yet the lion seems to be upon the whole a faithful husband. He remains with his mate while the cubs are young, and helps to provide food for them and to teach them how to get on in life."

"Just like a big robber would teach a little robber to kill and rob," said Fletcher, who had the greatest contempt for all things low, mean, and cruel.

“Only with this difference: the lion simply obeys a blind impulse of his nature in preying upon the weak, and has no knowledge of a better way; while the robber might, but will not, fill a nobler destiny.”

THE ELEPHANT.

“I THINK, for my part,” said Fletcher, “that the elephant is a more interesting animal than the lion; and if I had named them, I should have called *him* the ‘king of beasts.’”



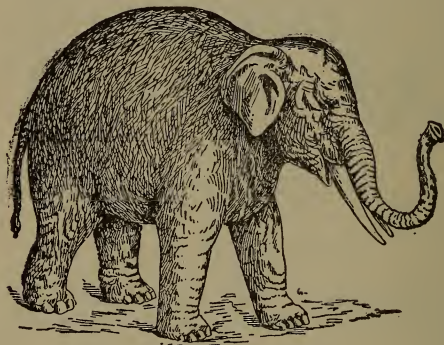
THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT.

“I quite agree with you,” said the Professor. “Indeed, there are several animals that might dispute his kingship with Sir Lion. The elephant is larger, the tiger is more savage and fierce, and the leopard is more beautiful. To me the elephant has always been a peculiarly interesting study. Ages ago there were many species of elephant, but all these are now extinct except the African and the Asiatic.”

“What is the difference between them?” asked Fletcher.

“The African elephant is larger than the Asiatic, and its ears are enormous, making a perfect cape over the shoulders when thrown back. It has heavier tusks, and these belong to both sexes; but only the males have tusks in the Asiatic elephant.”

“What are elephants good for?” asked Fletcher, who always wanted to know the uses to which animals could be put.



THE ASIATIC ELEPHANT.

“They are good for many things. Think of the value of the ivory which is obtained from their tusks! It is said that England alone imports nearly a million and a half pounds of ivory every year, and that thirty thousand elephants are killed to obtain this. Then, the natives of Africa hunt the elephant for its flesh, which they greatly esteem as an article of food. In Asia

the elephant is used for domestic purposes and as a beast of burden, its great strength and docility making it very valuable. In olden times elephants were used in wars. Wooden towers were fastened upon their backs, and under cover of these the archers aimed their shafts; but the use of firearms has about done away with elephants as an aid to warriors.

“How are elephants caught? It seems to me it would be very hard to get such powerful animals.”

“Sometimes a single male elephant is caught by using a tame female as a decoy; but when the hunters desire to capture a whole herd they construct a huge corral in the heart of the forest, with an opening on one side. Hundreds of ‘beaters’ encircle the haunts of the elephants, and they are gradually driven toward the corral. Fires are built in all directions except on the entrance to the corral. Then, with a great noise and din, the ‘beaters’ rush upon the half-crazed elephants, who can see no other way of escape; so they flee toward the corral, which is soon closed up with the trunks of trees, etc., and the elephants are captives.”

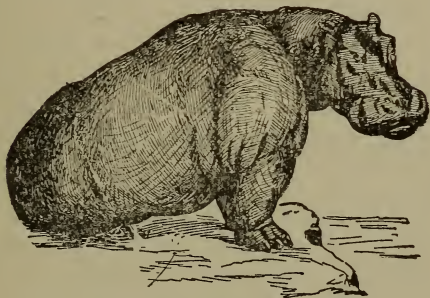
“Dear me! I should think an elephant hunt would be fine sport!” exclaimed Fletcher, in whose veins ran the blood of many generations of hunters. “Is it true, Professor, that white

elephants are worshiped in India?" It seems to me that I have read this."

"No; they are not exactly worshiped, but they are regarded with a veneration akin to worship. A white elephant is regarded as a necessary adjunct to royalty, and ranks next to the queen. In the sixteenth century long wars were waged between Siam and other States because each wanted to possess a certain white elephant, and while they were warring over this elephant five kings were killed."

HIPPOPOTAMUS.

“UMPH!” exclaimed Uncle Si as the Professor opened the natural history at the picture of a huge, unwieldly beast, “now sho’ yo’ is a caution! I ’lowed dat ol’ rhinocehoss were ugly ernuff, but dis un takes de cake. What yer call him, Puffesser?”



THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

“This is a hippopotamus, Uncle Si. Don’t you like his looks?”

“Law no, Puffesser; dere ain’ nuffin’ ’tall ’bout dat critter ter mak’ er body tak’ er likin’ t’ ’im.”

Just then Fletcher entered, and, catching the last of Uncle Si’s remarks, said: “Maybe if you would tell us something about the ugly

brute we should find that he is more interesting than he looks. Won't you try, Professor?"

"Well," began the Professor, "the hippopotamus is not a very handsome animal, but, for all that, he is very interesting and very useful. The hippopotamus is found only in Africa; so you ought not to find fault with him, Uncle Si; he's from your country."

"None o' my kentry; no, 'ndeed," said Uncle Si with decision. "I ain' no Guinny nigger! I'se f'um ol' Firginny, I is, an' b'longed t' de fus' famblies, too. So I ain' gwine'r claim kin wid dat ugly brute. Why, his littl' ol' laigs ain' no longer'n yer finger, an his haid's bigger'n his body."

"Yes, he is not at all handsome, Uncle Si; he is large and ungainly in the last degree. Sometimes a huge specimen will measure fully fourteen feet from the mouth to the tip of the tail. It is about five feet high, and its measure around its girth is as much as its entire length. Its small ears work constantly in its efforts to hear distant sounds. Its legs are so short that it looks nearly as if it were on the ground, and its feet are so small that it seems as if they would not be able to support its heavy body."

"Are they dangerous?" asked Fletcher.

"Not at all, unless they are wounded or their young are in danger. Then they fight with

a fierceness that knows no bounds. They are always found in herds near water, and pass most of the day in water. Then at night they come out to find food, and woe betide the fields which they enter! What they do not devour they trample with their heavy bodies, and in order to protect their fields the people along the banks of the Nile build great fires to scare them away. They cannot live away from the water, and it is astonishing to see how expertly their great unwieldy bodies can dive and sport in the water."

"What de critters good for?" asked Uncle Si, who thought that everything and everybody ought to be "good for" something.

"Well, the flesh is very delicate and nice to eat, and is much sought after for the table. The fatty matter between the skin and the muscles is one of the best of animal fats, and the skin makes good whips, while the tusks and some of the teeth used to be much used in the manufacture of artificial teeth. It used to be an easy matter to find whole herds of these animals in Africa; but wherever the country is opened up they are pursued by man, and now they are becoming scarce. Several varieties are known to have once existed that now are nowhere found, and we may live to see the day when a hippopotamus is a thing of the past."

THE KANGAROO.

“How large is a kangaroo, Professor?” asked Fletcher, as he opened the book and disclosed the picture of the ungainly animal.

“The kangaroo varies in size from that of a sheep down to a small rabbit. When first born the kangaroo is the most immature and imperfect of animals, even the young of what is called the great kangaroo not being much more than an inch long. They are blind, naked, and helpless.”

“Where in the world do the poor little things stay?” asked Fletcher in astonishment.

“They stay in the mother’s pouch, for, like our opossum, the kangaroo belongs to the *Marsupialia*. You remember what they are?”

“O yes; they are animals that have pouches in which to carry their young,” promptly replied Fletcher, who rarely forgot anything he had once learned; “but kangaroos do not live in America, do they, Professor?”

“No; they belong to Australia and Tasmania. The first were found by Capt. Cook in 1770, and these animals were so different from any he had ever seen that he killed several and brought back their skins with him. They were

called 'kangaroo' by the natives, and we have kept the name, only changing the spelling slightly. As you say, the kangaroo is an ugly, ungainly creature. Its head seems entirely too small for the rest of its body, and tapers forward to the nose. The shoulders and fore limbs are poorly developed and lacking in strength.



THE KANGAROO.

The hind limbs are large and strong and seemingly out of all proportion. So, instead of going along on its 'all fours,' as we say of other quadrupeds, the kangaroo usually gets over ground by a series of immense bounds."

"How do they manage when they want to

stop?" asked Fletcher. I should think, with their little, short fore legs, and their big, long hind legs, they would tumble heels over head."

"So they would if they relied on their fore limbs for support; but, instead of that, they stand almost erect on their hind legs, supported by their large, strong tail."

"On what do kangaroos live?" inquired Fletcher with interest.

"They are strict vegetarians, and sometimes the smaller varieties feed on roots. They are hunted by the natives for food; and the colonists too make war upon them, for they destroy the grass which is needed for the vast flocks of sheep in Australia."

"Are there many kinds of kangaroo?"

"Yes; there are various animals belonging to this class. They differ somewhat in shape, in teeth, and, as I said at first, they differ greatly in size; but they all resemble each other in their awkward, ungainly form and queer mode of locomotion. Then, too, there is a rat known as a kangaroo rat, which has no pouch, but otherwise looks exactly like a true kangaroo."

THE BEAR.

“As the chestnuts interfered with our bears, we had better resume the subject to-day,” said the Professor the day after he and Fletcher had gone chestnuting. “Here we have our books,

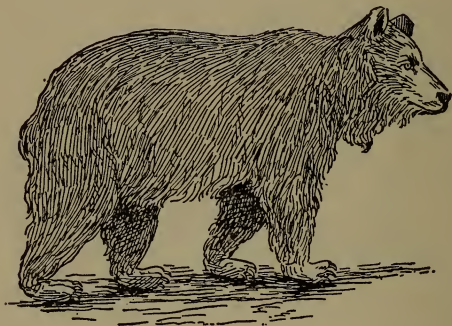


THE GRIZZLY BEAR.

and we will enjoy discussing the different varieties when we have their pictures before us. This is a fine fellow. Can you tell me his name?” asked the teacher as he displayed the picture of a large white bear attacking a walrus.

“That is the polar bear,” said Fletcher without a moment’s hesitation; “I know him well.”

“Yes, this polar or white bear is the only species of sea bear known. If you could see the soles of its feet, you would notice that they are well protected with close-growing hair. This is a great help to it in walking on the slippery ice. This is the largest bear known. Sometimes it is nearly ten feet long and weighs over fifteen hundred pounds.”



THE BROWN BEAR.

“They live on fish, don’t they?” asked Fletcher.

“Yes, on fish, seals, and the dead bodies of whales and even birds. But that this bear can exist without meat is proved by the fact that one was fed in confinement for two years on bread alone. But in the arctic regions, from whence these bears come, they need the heat that comes from eating animal food, as

they often walk about for days on solid ice. They are great swimmers, and do not hesitate to go far away from the shore."

"Uncle Stuart told me that he had killed several grizzly bears in the Rocky Mountains," said Fletcher.

"Yes, the grizzly is no doubt the most cruel as well as the strongest of all American animals. Think of a bear so fierce and strong that it can carry off a bison weighing over a thousand pounds!"

"What color is it?" asked Fletcher.

"Usually a yellowish-brown, and its coarse, grizzled fur has no commercial value."

"Is its flesh good for food?"

"No; even the Indians refuse to eat the flesh of the grizzly, while they consider other meat a great delicacy."

Now we will turn to this picture of the brown bear. Of all land bears, this is the most common and the most useful, as there is hardly any portion of its body but is turned to account by the people of the regions where it dwells. From Spain to Japan the brown bear is found; and this is the variety used in the bear-baiting of which you read."

"Is that the same kind of bear that we see traveling over the country and that dances so funny on its hind legs?" asked Fletcher.

“Yes, sometimes. These bears are not savage like the grizzlies, but will fight bravely when attacked. The bear does not kill its victim with a blow of its paw, like a cat, nor seize it in its teeth, like a dog, but squeezes it until life is extinct. Then, here you see the American black bear, which, owing to its fine, soft fur, is greatly sought after. The Indians hold this bear in the greatest reverence, and rarely kill it. Bears are passionately fond of honey, and there is one variety called the honey bear, which comes from India, and is often seen in company with Hindoo jugglers. But our hour is gone, and there is still much left to tell about bears.”

THE GIRAFFE FAMILY.

ON the sandy plains of Africa, amid luxurious thickets of mimosa trees, in peace and freedom dwelt a happy, liberty-loving family. There were the mother, father, and four children, who were the joy and pride of their parents' hearts. The father was about fifteen feet high, and his wife somewhat less. So you see they were taller than the camel, or even the lordly lion; but more than half of their great height was due to their great length of neck and limb, for their bodies were only about seven feet high at their shoulders, the highest point. Their heads were small and shapely, and looked much like the head of a deer, only they lacked the antlers of the deer. Their soft, lustrous eyes gave their faces a gentle expression that was peculiarly attractive, and their graceful bodies were beautifully dappled; the background was orange red, and the dark spots made one think of the leopard. Indeed, the family name was *camelopard*; and one must admit that the characteristics of both camel and leopard were beautifully blended. Their long tails ended in luxurious tufts of dark hair, which was not alone for ornament, for it served to keep off the many poi-



THE GIRAFFE.

sonous flies and other insects so deadly in that tropical clime.

"Come, my dear," said Mr. Giraffe, who had been quietly browsing among the mimosa trees. "I think we will leave this place and travel onward, for I see something in the distance which fills me with foreboding. You know our land has been full of paleface hunters of late, and they have hearts that know no pity. Come, let us up and away."

But the words were scarcely uttered when a party of hunters came in sight, and their foaming horses and the lassoes they carried showed that they meant no good to our happy family of giraffes. They all bounded away with the long strides peculiar to them, the horsemen following hard after. It was a close, hot chase, but the giraffes were fresh and fleet. One of the hunters came very near to the fleeing creatures, and just as he thought the victory was his one blow from the agile heels of the head of the family laid him out upon the arid sand. Two of the party paused to care for their fallen comrade; the rest went flying on.

Finally two of the young giraffes were captured, and one of the hunters, a fierce-looking Arab, cried out: "We'll never catch the old ones; let's hamstring them." So they drew their long swords, and, riding up as near as pos-

sible, struck one sharp blow, which cut the tendons of the giraffes' legs, and the two noble creatures fell panting and helpless upon the sand.

So the flesh of the father and mother was turned into meat, and it was sweet and toothsome as the finest venison; and the skin made the finest leather for sandals you ever saw. But the two little orphan giraffes were carried to San Francisco and placed in the zoölogical gardens, where Fletcher will see them when he visits his Uncle Stuart next year.

THE LEOPARD.

“I HAVE never been able to understand whether leopards and panthers are the same animal or not; and then sometimes I read about the ‘pard.’ Does that mean leopard too?” asked Fletcher one day after a long and earnest scrutiny of a beautiful spotted animal.



THE LEOPARD.

“The names ‘leopard,’ ‘panther,’ and ‘pard’ have been variously given to animals belonging to the feline or cat family, which are smaller but scarcely less fierce than the lion. Some men say that leopards and panthers are the same animal, only with such variations as may be in the same family; while others declare that they should be classed as two separate species. The larger and more robust variety is called panther, and the smaller and more graceful is what we understand by leopard; but these ani-

mals certainly belong to the cat family, and are so much alike that I think it is useless to try to divide them," said the Professor, who was never so well pleased as when his pupil showed a disposition to inquire into matters on his own account. "Leopards are wondrously beautiful creatures. Their fur varies from a



THE OUNCE.

pale fawn color to a brownish buff on the upper part, and gradually turning to a pure white below. This is spotted over with dark brown and black, looking like rosettes. Sometimes leopards are perfectly black, but these are what are called 'freaks,' and are by no means common. The leopard is as cruel and ferocious as

the lion or tiger, although not so large or powerful as these. It likes to dwell in wooded regions, and can climb trees with a good deal of ease; but it only does this when pursued, and prefers to stay on the ground."

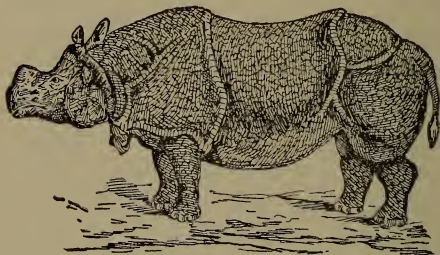
"Are there any other catlike animals?" asked Fletcher.

"Yes; there is the ounce, or snow leopard. It is never found except among the 'everlasting snows,' and is covered with a very heavy yellowish-gray fur, spotted like the true leopard. It kills wild sheep, goats, dogs, or any small animal it can steal upon; but I never heard of it killing a man. Then there is the ocelot, a handsome wild cat which is found in the warm regions of our own country. It is not fierce and bold, like the common wild cat, but timid, and shrinks away from man. And the serval is a wild cat of Africa. It has a large, heavy body and a shorter tail than the ordinary cat. Indeed, there are many other members of the cat family with which I hope to make you acquainted."

THE RHINOCEROS.

“KIN yer tell me what kin’ o’ *hoss* de *rhinocelhoss* am? I ain’ neber seed one ob ’em,” said Uncle Si as he and Fletcher sat over the glowing coals one December day discussing popcorn and natural history by turns.

Fletcher looked puzzled. “Why, I never



ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS.

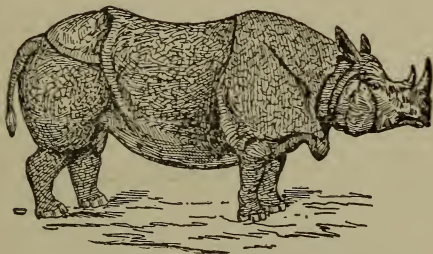
heard of such a horse as that, Uncle Si. Are you not mistaken in the name?”

“I doan t’ink I kin be, littl’ mas’. Me ’n’ Uncle Zeke ’uz ’scussin’ wariuous animules las’ night, an’ he tol’ me ’bout de *rhinocelhoss* what he seed in John Robinson’s show long ergo. He say hit were de ugliest creetur he eber seed, wid er sort o’ stumpy tail an’ er great ol’ horn stickin’ outen de top o’ hit’s nose.”

The light began to dawn upon what Uncle Si meant, and Fletcher said: "Perhaps he said *rhinoceros*, Uncle Si, instead of *rhinocehoss*."

"No, he nebber; he jes' said de berry t'ing I done tol' yer. But he mout o' *meant* dat udder—what yo' call 'im? Uncle Zeke's lak dis ol' niggah: he gits t'ings sort o' jumbled up 'casionally."

"Perhaps he *meant* rhinoceros, if he did not



TWO-HORNED RHINOCEROS.

say so, Uncle Si. There is a very ugly animal by that name. Do you want to hear about him? Here is his picture now." And Fletcher opened his book on animals.

Uncle Si chuckled with delight. "Yes, sah. I know dat's de bery gentermun. Dere's de snout, dere's de stumpy tail. Dat's him. I'll bet my bones on dat. Whah he come f'um?"

"Well, this is the one-horned rhinoceros. He comes from a country over on the other side

of the world called India. He is the largest and best known of his family. In India he runs wild, but we never see him except in shows or zoölogical gardens. Then there's another one-horned rhinoceros that comes from Java. That is smaller than the other and has a different-looking skin. Then there are rhinoceroes that have two horns, and I think they are uglier than the one-horned fellows. Here is the picture of one."

"Ugh! he am er ornery-lookin' brute," said Uncle Si, recoiling. What do dese rhinocehosses, eat? Dey's wicious-lookin' anmules."

"They eat leaves and the branches of trees. They are what we call vegetable feeders. They sleep during the day, and come out at night to browse upon the bushes and lower branches of trees. They are not wild and fierce like lions and tigers, but are timid and afraid of man; and they are good runners, but not equal to a swift horse. Look at their feet—they look just like those of a horse, don't they?"

"Yes, an' I bleeb Uncle Zeke 'uz right—I bleeb dey's a kin' o' hosses."

"They do belong to the same class of animals, Uncle Si; they are what you call hoofed animals, and the horse and the tapir are the only other hoofed animals that belong to that class."

"Do folks *eat* dese rhinocehosses?" asked

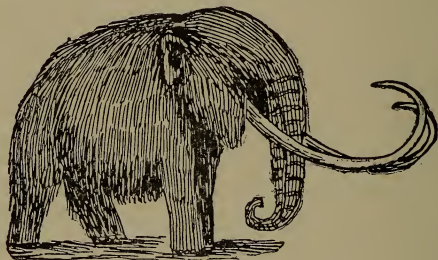
Uncle Si, still clinging to his original pronunciation.

“In the countries where they come from they sometimes roast their meat, and it is said to be very juicy and sweet. But it is not likely that rhinoceros meat will ever get common anywhere, as the hunters are killing out these animals very fast. The Professor was telling me the other day that there used to be a great many kinds of rhinoceroses that are not found at all now. They have all been killed out.”

“Well,” said Uncle Si, “effen dey looks lak dere picters, I doan blame folks fur killin’ ’em, for dey’s p’intedly too ornery-lookin’ ter lib.” And Uncle Si turned away from the picture of the “rhinocehoss” with a look of disgust on his kind old face.

THE MAMMOTH.

“HAVE we all the animals now that the world has ever seen?” said Fletcher one day as he amused himself with a copy of an old zoölogy which his father had studied when he was a boy.



THE MAMMOTH.

“Ah no,” my boy,” replied the Professor; “since time began the world has had many animals of which we have no specimens at all to-day. These are what we call extinct animals.”

“But how do animals become extinct, and how do we find out anything about them when they are extinct?” There are various ways in which a species may become extinct, but I suppose the most common is the perpetual inroads upon the animal kingdom by that prince

of all animals, man. But we find out about extinct animals by their skeletons and remains, which are found in the earth, in caves, and sometimes petrified among the rocks. There is nothing more fascinating than the unearthing of these hidden wonders, and many learned men have spent their lives in such studies."

"What have they found?" asked Fletcher.

"They have found the perfect skeletons and in some cases the remains of animals which are not now found in any country. The best authenticated of these is the mammoth, an immense creature resembling the elephant of the present day. In the frozen regions of Siberia are found not only vast numbers of skeletons of this animal, but even the entire carcasses, with the flesh, skin, and hair in a fair state of preservation."

"What is the difference between it and our own elephants?" Fletcher queried.

"The formation of the teeth is different. You know naturalists lay great stress on what they term an animal's dentition. Then the skull is somewhat different in shape. But a very marked point of difference is that the mammoth was covered not only with a coat of long, coarse outer hair, but with a close, woolly under hair of a reddish-brown color. From the fact that for a long period a regular trade in the ivory from these

unearthed skeletons has been carried on, you may imagine how numerous the family of mammoths must have been."

"Are there any more extinct animals? I like to hear about them," pursued Fletcher.

"Yes, many others, but the principal ones are the mastodon and the megatherium."

THE WHALE.

“WHAT yer givin’ me, chile? De bery idee! Sholy yer mus’ t’ink dis ol’ niggah’s in hes do-tage! *Joner neber swallered de whale*, yer say! Yer can’t poke no sech ez dat down my froat! In cose Jonah swallered de whale, an’ ebber-



GREENLAND OR ARCTIC WHALE.

body what’s larnt in de Scriptor knows dat fur er fac’. I’s hyerd Brudder Hankins circum-navigate dat p’int too offen t’ be mistaken. De nex’ t’ing yer’ll be tellin’ me dat Noer neber build de ark, an’ dat Samson didn’t slay dem Philipppines wid de jawbone ob an ass! G’long off, chile, an’ doan try t’ onsettles dis ol’ dahkey’s ’ligious principle;” with which admonition Uncle Si left Fletcher to pursue his natural history studies without let or hindrance.

“Tell me,” asked Fletcher as the Professor put on his glasses to examine the unlovely picture of a whale in the volume before him, “is

the whale a fish, or a reptile, or a mammal? I cannot quite make out just where it belongs."

"The whale, my dear boy, is no more of a fish than a bat is a bird. Only in its fishlike form and its adaptation to the water does it resemble a fish; but in every particular which goes to classify an animal the whale is as much a mammal as a cow or a horse. We cannot sup-



SPERM WHALE.

pose that everything that lives in the water is a fish."

"What is meant by the 'blubber' of whales? You hear so much of that when people speak of whales."

"The blubber is a peculiarly dense kind of fat just beneath the whale's skin."

"What is it good for?" asked Fletcher.

"The whale fisher would tell you that it is good to make oil, but I dare say if the whale could talk he would tell you that it is good to keep him warm. Whale oil, you know, is a most important article of trade. This oil is made from the blubber of any sort of whale, and

even of dolphins. Then there is a particular oil known as 'sperm oil' that is obtained only from the sperm whale. The whale fisheries of the world are one of the most important sources of trade, and hundreds of men spend their lives in this perilous business."

"Where are the whale fisheries, Professor?"

"They may be best classed as the British, Norwegian, and American. You know it has not been an easy matter to settle just where the fishing rights of each country began and ended, and nations have often come very near to war on account of their whaling interests."

"Are whales good for anything besides their oil?"

"Yes. If you will think a moment, you will recall another very important article that comes from the whale."

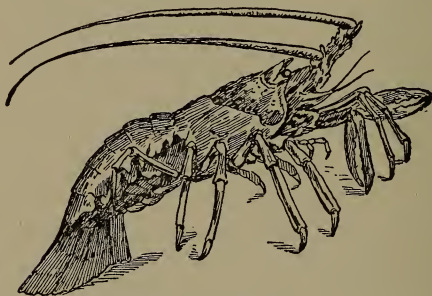
"Why, to be sure—whalebone. I wonder I should forget that. That is what the women use so much."

"Yes, and not only the women; for whalebone, besides being used in dresses, etc., is cut very fine and made into various kinds of brushes for cleaning machinery, ships, etc. Indeed, the whale is a most interesting and useful animal, and I am glad that Uncle Si is mistaken in thinking that Jonah swallowed him."

CRUSTACEANS.

“WELL, Uncle Si, we have come to the crustaceans in our natural history. Would you like to join us?” said Fletcher teasingly, one morning as the old darky busied himself about the schoolroom.

“*Crus* what?” ejaculated Uncle Si, dropping



THE CRAWFISH.

his under jaw, and struggling very hard to master the big word.

“Crustaceans, Uncle Si. They are animals whose bodies are made up of funny little bony rings, and each one of these rings generally has a pair of limbs hitched on to it.”

“I dunno, honey; I dunno! I’s pow’ful fon’ o’ hearin’ y’alls talk ’bout dem high-larnt sub-

jecks, but 'peahs lak dey won't stick in dis ol' niggah's head. Dey kinder rumble erroun' erwhile, an' den erway dey goes. Speck I'd bettah look atter dem squash bugs in de gyarden. I kin circumnavergate dem, an' dere's *eatin'* in



THE SHRIMP.

dat bizness, while dere ain' nuffin' but *fun* in hangin' roun' lissenin' t' y'all's 'scuss ferloserfy;" and rather regretfully Uncle Si left Fletcher and the Professor to their lesson on crustaceans.

"Suppose," began the Professor, "you had never heard of the word 'crustaceans.' How would you go to work to find out what it meant?"

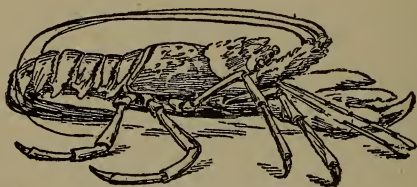
"I should consult the dictionary," said Fletcher in a twinkling.

"But suppose you were where no dictionary could be had. What then?"

"Well," began Fletcher, meditating a moment, "I should remember my Latin, and when I consider that *crusta* meant the hard surface of a body, I should soon know that crustaceans are

animals with a hard or crusty covering. Is that right?"

"That's it exactly," said the Professor, well pleased. Crustaceans are covered with a sort of horny outer covering that, like the envelope we put on our letter, protects the parts within. Only the inner part of their crustacean grows to his envelope instead of simply being inclosed in it, as the letter is in the paper envelope. In-



THE LOBSTER.

side of this bony covering is the skeleton of the crustacean. This is made up of a series of rings, twenty-one in all, and these divisions are called *somites*, or segments. We will call them segments, for we all know that 'segments' means 'parts.'"

"How do the things breathe?" asked Fletcher.

"They breathe by means of gills. In some species they are attached to the sides of the body; in others, to some of the limbs."

“Then of course crustaceans all live in water, if they breathe through gills.”

“No, that is the strange part of it. While we must suppose that water is the natural element of crustaceans, yet there are various kinds of these animals that habitually live out of the water. We shall find out about this when we get to crabs, as we shall in our next lesson. But all crustaceans lay their eggs in the water, and the young are hatched there, after which the parents give themselves no further concern about them.”

“What crustaceans are we going to take up, Professor?” asked Fletcher, scanning the pictures of those bony, sprangling creatures with keen interest.

“I dare say when we have found out something about crabs and lobsters we will be content to go on to the next group, for these are the animals that usually come into our mind when we speak of crustaceans.”

A CRABBED CREATURE.

“UMPH! what yer call dat dere ten-legged creetur’, littl’ mas’?” said Uncle Si as Fletcher



THE EDIBLE CRAB.

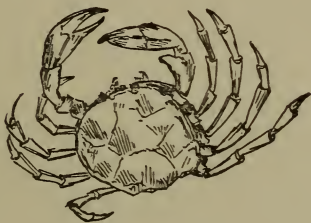
examined an ugly, sprawling crab under the microscope.

“That’s a crab, Uncle Si. Suppose you let him get a grip on you with his nippers, just to see if you can pull loose?”

“Now mebbe I will,” cried Uncle Si, retreating. “When dat gentermun git dem claws o’ hissen inter my meat hit gwine t’ be when dis ol’ niggah done lossen de use o’ hes laigs.”

"You don't like his looks, eh, Uncle Si?" said the Professor, entering just then. "Why, Fletcher and I think him a very interesting animal!"

"Dat all may be so, Mas' Puffesser, but dere must be diffunce o' 'pinion in de bes' ob famblys, an' you an' littl' mas' kin circumquatulate 'bout dem crawlin', squirmin' warmints all yer lak's, but I won' tek none ob 'em in *mine*."



THE LAND CRAB.

"I fear Uncle Si's natural history education must be cut short," said the Professor, as Uncle Si departed whistling "Down in Alabama," "unless he can overcome his horror of what he calls 'squirmin' creeturs.' To me this crab is wonderfully interesting. Just see his ten legs, and watch how his fore legs play the part of nippers to clasp things and as weapons of offense and defense! Did you ever see a baby crab?"

"I never did," said Fletcher.

"Well, you'd never suspect that it was a crab

at all; indeed, they look so little like their parents that it was a long time before even our best naturalists suspected their relation. They go through several metamorphoses, just as insects do. When the little crab is hatched out in the water where its mother has deposited her eggs it has a long tail and every appendage for swimming. Its eyes are not elevated on a stalk, but are what we call sessile. By and by it sheds its tail and its eyes come out on stalks on its fore legs. Still it takes several moltings to give it a crablike appearance. Like some lizards, the crab can cast off a limb when it is injured, just as the lizard will cast off its tail to keep from being captured; and here comes in the wonderful kindness and providence of God: When this is done, instead of doing without, as we superior creatures must do, the crab is his own surgeon, and by a power unknown to us he can reproduce the limb that was lost."

"Are all crabs as small as this little fellow?" asked Fletcher. "I found him in the bottom of our yawl."

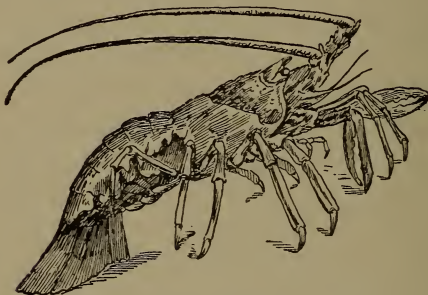
"No, indeed! there are many varieties of very large crabs. There is a great or edible crab, which was esteemed a delicacy by the Romans long ago. This is one of the largest known crabs, and often weighs from ten to twelve pounds. Then there is the shore crab, found

on the coasts of Britain. Then there is a crab called the *inachus kempferi*, which is larger than all other crabs, if you count its nippers, which are sometimes ten feet from tip to tip; but its body is not to be compared to the great crab as an article of diet. These are various other species, of which I have not time to speak to-day. Crab-fishing is a popular industry off the coast of Scotland, and many crabs are also shipped to England from Norway, where they are found in great numbers."

"No wonder cross-grained people are called 'crabbed!'" said Fletcher as the lesson concluded, "for a more crusty, rough, disagreeable-looking somebody than Mr. Crab I can't imagine. I'll try never to let mother say I'm crabbed any more, if it makes me look like *him*."

A HOMELY PRISONER.

“WELL, I have read of crayfish all my life, and I thought they were something very fine and stylish, and lo and behold! they are nothing but old ugly *crawfish*, that have nibbled at my



CRAWFISH.

toes all my life!” and Fletcher threw down his book in supreme disgust. I thought when my cousins in Louisiana wrote to me about ‘*cray-fishing*’ that it was very grand sport. I didn’t know I was doing the very same thing here on the banks of the French Broad.”

Fletcher took Mr. Crawfish—or Crayfish, if you prefer—from a tin can where he had safely stored him, and looked at him critically. “You are a full-fledged crustacean, and no mistake,”

he said, addressing the ugly, horny fellow, "for your coat is crusty and hard, to be sure, and there are your old strong nippers and your four other pairs of walking legs—ten legs for you. That makes you a decapod crustacean, horny-bodied and ten-legged. And here I see you have six other pairs of legs hidden under your abdomen. The Professor says they are your 'swimmerets,' or little swimmers. No wonder I had such a time catching you! A fellow with ten walkers and twelve swimmers is a poor excuse if he can't get away from a boy with only two legs," and Fletcher chuckled at his own joke.

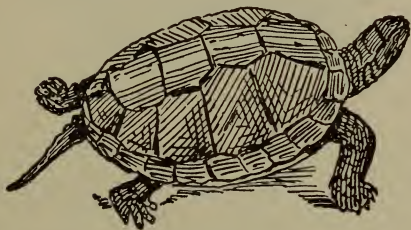
"I think, my man, if you were to cut off your tail, that looks so fishy, you'd be a regular crab, and I've seen you use those strong nippers of yours, and it's no wonder the little minnows scud away when they see you coming, for I'll not forget in many a day how you clamped my foot when I waded in after you. I believe I will put you back into the river, and some day I'll come back and catch you again. Maybe next time Aunt Mimy will put you in the skillet."

As Fletcher wended his way to the river he met the Professor and showed him his ugly captive. "Yes, he's a pretty crusty-looking fellow," said the Professor. "I would put him back in the river, for I never saw any one eat those small crawfishes. In Louisiana and all

along the Southern coast crayfishing, as it is termed, is fine sport, and the sport is not done until they are eaten, for they are really delicious. In Europe too the river crayfish, which is much larger than this little fellow, is largely caught and is thought to be a great delicacy. The Australian crayfish is as large as a lobster. There is the shrimp too that is good to eat. It is like the crayfish in having ten walking and twelve swimming limbs. These decapod crustaceans walk around on the sandy sea bottom. There are two kinds of shrimp. One of them turns brown when boiled; the other red, like the lobster. You have heard of 'red as a boiled lobster,' I am sure. On the eastern coast of North America shrimps are abundant, and they are found also from Southern California to Alaska, on the western coast. One of the finest breakfasts I ever enjoyed was partly made of shrimp at a San Francisco hotel, where the Chinese waiter kept insisting on 'slimp heap good,' and I found that he was right about that."

TORTOISE, TURTLE, TERRAPIN.

ONE day Fletcher entered Uncle Si's cabin with a queer dun-colored creature in a little box. It had short club-shaped feet with blunt



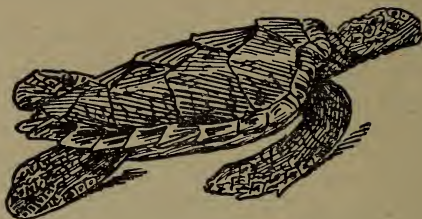
MUD TORTOISE.

claws, and on its back it carried a heavy and very bonelike shell. Uncle Si paused to look at it.

"Uncle Si," said Fletcher, "I want you to tell me whether this is a turtle or a tortoise or a terrapin. I know there is a difference, but I don't know just what it is."

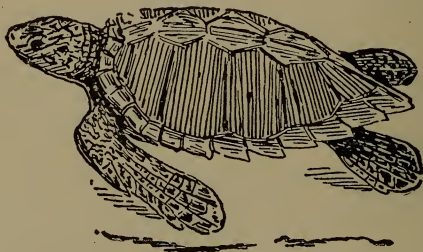
"Now heah yer is erg'in, tryin' t' puzzle dis ol' niggah 'bout dat ol' mud turkle, but yer'll hatter go t' de Puffesser dis time, kase I doan jes' 'zackly know de diffunce myse'f. G'long an' ax him: he gib yer heap mo' satisfication than a po' ol' ign'ant darky."

So Fletcher picked up his box and carried it and his question to the Professor, whom he



HAWKBILL TURTLE.

found at leisure on the lawn. "Strictly speaking," said the Professor, "that is a terrapin,

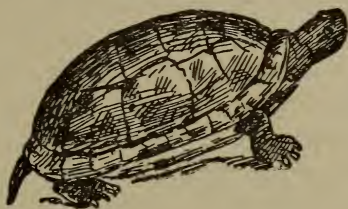


LOGGERHEAD TURTLE.

which is properly the name of the fresh-water species of the order of reptiles called chelonians. Can you remember that name?"

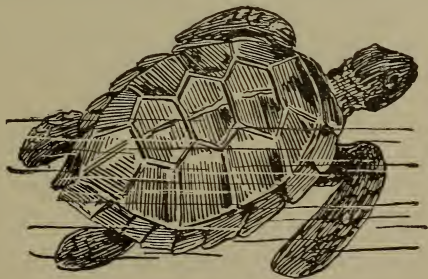
"'Chelonians'—that is pretty tough, but I'll try. So this is a terrapin. Uncle Si says 'it's nuffin' but er ol' mud turkle,' and I did get it on

the banks of the fish pond. Now, what I want to know, if you please, sir, is: "Are turtles, tortoises, and terrapins all the same animal?"



TORTOISE.

"They are, and they are not. You are an American, but you are a different sort of American from your sister. So, turtles, terrapins, and tortoises are all chelonians, but they are not



GREEN TURTLE.

exactly alike, As I said at the outset, terrapin is the name of the fresh-water species of the tropics and of the New World, so that, strictly

speaking, terrapin and turtle sometimes mean the same; as turtle is the name of all the various chelonians who pass most of their lives in water, whether it is salt or fresh water."

"What about Mr. Tortoise," asked Fletcher.

"Well, you might call him a dry land turtle, as the name tortoise should be given only to those members of the family who live on land. Let me see your terrapin."

They took the ugly creature out of its box, and it thrust its head out of its shell and gazed curiously about. The Professor told Fletcher that chelonians had no teeth.

"No teeth? How do they eat?" he exclaimed.

"If he would let you look into his mouth, you would find that his jaws are protected by horny sheaths, whose sharp edges are almost as good as teeth."

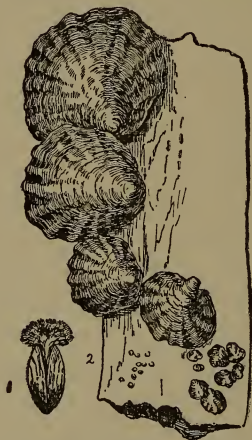
"What a funny little tail he has!" said Fletcher, as Mr. Terrapin crept along on the floor, as if to get acquainted with his new surroundings.

"Yes, this one's tail is short. All chelonians have some sort of a tail, but it varies in length. You would hardly believe it, would you? that, counting tortoises, terrapins, and turtles, there are about two hundred and twenty varieties of this little creature. They all lay eggs, and are useful to man in many ways. You have seen

your mother's beautiful tortoise-shell comb, and this is only one of the many uses to which the shell of the tortoise is adapted. I could tell you many other interesting things about these little creatures, but your father is calling you now."

MOLLUSKS IN GENERAL AND OYSTERS IN PARTICULAR.

“DID you and Uncle Si exhaust the subject of ‘oystyers’ in your talk yesterday?” asked



¹ Young oyster with locomotive power.

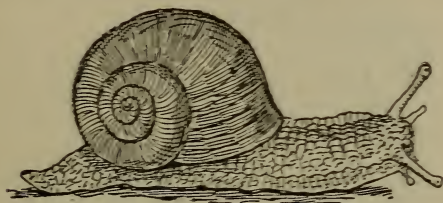
² Group of oysters of different ages attached to a piece of wood.

the Professor the day after Uncle Si had delivered his recollections of the “toothsome bivalve.”

“I hardly think we did,” said Fletcher. “Uncle Si is pretty good authority on any subject he’s familar with, but I want to hear what you have

to say on a few 'skyentifical' points, as Uncle Si says. The first thing I want you to tell me, if you please, is to what class of animals oysters belong."

"They are what we call mollusks—or Mollusca, to be strictly 'skyentifical.' This is one of the most extensive of all the families, and takes in oysters, clams, mussels, snails, barnacles, and



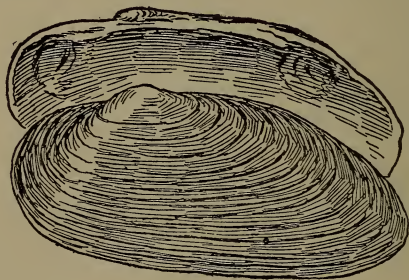
SNAIL.

hundreds of other marine and land creatures. There are shell-bearing mollusks and naked mollusks; but they are all alike in this: that they all commence their life as a single cell, which multiplies itself in the most wonderful and intricate manner. Oysters are the most important and to my mind the most interesting of all mollusks."

"They certainly are interesting, especially after Aunt Mimy has had hold of them," laughed Fletcher, who was a great oyster eater. "I read in the newspaper the other day that the

natural oyster beds were being exhausted, and that oyster culture would soon pass out of the hands of the fishermen, and that men who raised oysters artificially would manage the whole thing."

"That is very true. The fishermen, like the old woman who killed the goose that laid the

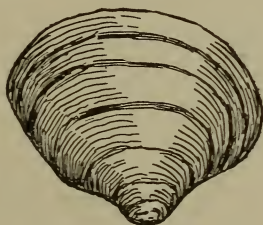


MUSSEL.

golden egg, have nearly ruined the natural beds by what is known as 'overdredging.' In the artificial beds the oysters are assorted, and those too small for market are put back into the sea and allowed to grow. You can get some idea of what an immense business the oyster industry is when I tell you that its products are three times as valuable as the cod fishery and six times as valuable as the whale fishery. There are in the United States over fifty thousand people employed in it, and more than \$10,500,000."

Fletcher opened his eyes in astonishment. He had never dreamed that the unpretentious little oyster was such an important personage. Where do they all come from—the oysters, I mean, not the people?” asked Fletcher as he noted the facts in his little book.

“In the United States fully eighty per cent come from the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Then in France, Great Britain—in fact, all over



CLAM.

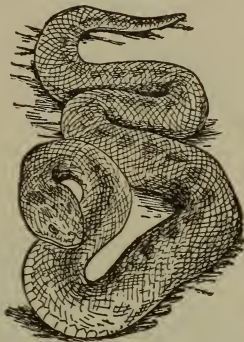
Europe—millions are caught every year. The French are rather ahead of all other countries in oyster culture, and the young oysters are collected upon tiles and placed in artificial ponds; so that they are under the control of the owners, just like the garden plants. These French oyster beds are kept under government control, and so are the beds in some of the other European countries. But in America and Great Britain the beds are free to all comers except during what is called ‘close time.’”

“What are cove oysters, Professor?”

“They are nothing but oysters that have been thoroughly steamed and are then sealed up air-tight. Usually the smaller oysters are taken for this purpose, while the finer ones are packed in ice and used as ‘fresh’ oysters. But you have never known the fine flavor of an oyster until you have taken them fresh from the oyster bed and roasted them shell and all in a fire built on the shore. Some day your father will take you to see your Virginia relatives, and then you can have this pleasure.”

SNAKE TALES.

“UMPH!” said Uncle Si as he beheld the pictures of reptiles graphically displayed in Fletcher’s natural history; “I doan see what yer want



VIPER.

t’ be steddysin’ ’bout dem horrid, creepin’ t’ings fur. ’Cordin’ t’ *my* ’pinion, dat am ergin Scrip-ter, fur doan de Bible plainly say dat dere am enmity ’twixt de seed o’ de ’oman an’ de sar-pint? Which sholy do mean dat folks ain’ got no biz’ness projeckin’ wid dem crawlin’, squirm-in’ creeturs. All dis ol’ nigger want to know ’bout snakes am how to *kill* ’em; an’ effen he happen t’ git bit, he gwine’r fly mighty quick fur de doctah stid o’ settin’ up zarnin’ in de joggerfy.”

So Uncle Si left Fletcher to “zarn in de joggerfy” while he went out to gather vegetables for dinner. But Fletcher had no religious scruples about projeckin’ wid dem crawlin’ creeters,” so he continued his studies, and gained much useful information on the subject of snakes. He found that there are between



RATTLESNAKE.

fifteen hundred and eighteen hundred different kinds of snakes, and that there is scarcely a spot of earth where some species of reptile is not found. He learned that there are but a comparatively small number in temperate regions, but amid the rank vegetation of the tropics they find their most congenial home and flourish in vast numbers.

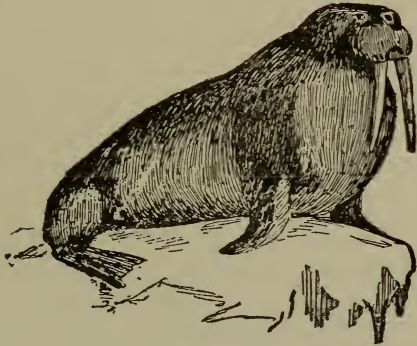
Most of the snakes known to science may be put in one of the following classes: Burrowing snakes, ground snakes, tree snakes, fresh-water snakes, sea snakes. Burrowing snakes live entirely under the ground, and are altogether harmless. Fresh-water snakes feed on fish, frogs, etc., and are perfectly harmless to man. Those snakes which live in the sea are poisonous; but as they rarely leave the water, and cannot live on the land, they should give us little uneasiness. Some snakes transact business in the night, but the majority of them are active only during the day; and the warmer it grows the happier they seem to be. Their narrow, wormlike tongues are generally black, and the end is forked. When angry or excited this tongue darts out in a way that may well make one tremble lest one may soon feel the deadly fangs. These fangs (in poisonous snakes) are connected with a poison gland, which the reptile knows well is his weapon of offense and of defense.

All snakes are meat eaters, or, as we say, carnivorous, and rarely eat anything which they themselves have not killed. Sometimes they eat their victim, or rather gulp it down, without taking the trouble to kill it; again, they will smother it by folding it in a close embrace, or will kill it with one thrust of their deadly

fangs, and then lie down by it and eat it at their leisure. Snakes use their teeth only to kill their prey, but not to masticate it as do all animals. They always swallow their victim whole, and it is taken into the stomach and digested. It is sometimes a laughable sight to see a snake in its efforts to force an entire frog or other animal down its gullet. Sometimes it takes its snakeship several hours to accomplish this feat, and when it is done it looks about as uncomfortable as we can well imagine any one who is supposed to have enjoyed a "square meal."

THE WALRUS.

“IF beauty were the only passport to favor,” said the Professor, “the walrus would be without a friend, for a creature more ungainly cannot well be imagined. A male walrus measures



WALRUS.

from ten to eleven feet from the end of its ugly nose to the end of its short, ungraceful tail. Its body is heavy and awkward, and its little rounded head, with no visible ears and small eyes, adds to its general unattractiveness. It has limbs in front and behind; the forearm (as it is sometimes called) is free only from the elbow, and ends in a broad, flat hand with well-marked webs for helping it in the water. The hind

limbs are inclosed in the skin of the body almost to the heel, and then end in a fan-shaped member that one hardly knows whether to call a foot or a hand. The skin of the walrus is tough and leathery, and has an added protection in the short, yellowish-brown hair that covers it.

“Without its tusks, which are lacking in very young animals, the walrus is homely enough, but when these come out they give the animal a fierce, snappish look that makes one shudder. And those sharp tusks are not to be despised as weapons of offense and defense, for, while the walrus will not harm you if left unmolested, yet, when used in defense of itself or its young, these tusks become deadly instruments of warfare. Usually, however, the tusks (sometimes two feet long) are used for digging and probing in the sand for the mollusks and crustaceans on which the walrus lives.

“Like nearly all mammals, the walrus is what we term gregarious. They do not enjoy living alone any more than we do, and are usually found in herds. They do not venture far into the open sea—the walrus, you know, is what we call a marine animal—but are found near the coast or on floating masses of ice.

“In the spring their young are born, and they love these with unusual affection. Polar

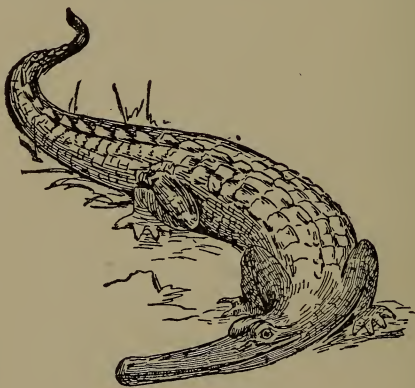
bears are their worst foes, and they use their great tusks on these with deadly force.

“The walrus does not love the balmy air of the temperate zone, but is found in the regions of eternal ice and snow. As far as man has explored the animal has been found, and in some of those frozen regions the walrus is the chief means of support for the inhabitants. One writer says: ‘The flesh supplies them with food; the ivory tusks are made into implements used in the chase and for domestic purposes, as well as an article of barter; while the skin furnishes the material for covering their summer habitations, harness for their dog teams, and lines for their fishing gear.’ The tusks of the walrus furnish a large portion of the ivory used in the manufacture of many useful and ornamental articles; but it is said by experts to be inferior in quality to the ivory of the elephant’s tusks. The skin makes good leather for many purposes, and the oil is also valuable.

“There were formerly vast numbers of walrus in the arctic regions, but man has warred upon them so mercilessly that their herds have been greatly diminished.”

THE CROCODILE.

“WELL, I don’t know what to make of myself,” said a baby crocodile as it spread itself out to bask in the sun on the banks of a tropical river. “I don’t know whether to call myself a fish or a fowl, a reptile or a quadruped, for it seems to me that I am a little of all. I can live



THE CROCODILE.

in the water, and am like a fish in that; I came out of an egg, so that makes me like a fowl; my form is like a lizard, and I have little, stumpy feet, but they will not carry me along, so I have to drag myself on the ground. I guess I am

more of a reptile than anything else, and yet I am not quite satisfied about the matter. I'll just go to sleep in the sun, and leave the whole business to those wise people who care for such things." So saying he gulped down an imprudent young fish that came that way, and soon was sleeping so soundly that a passing native mistook him for a log of wood and sat down upon him.

It is no wonder that this inquiring young fellow found it hard to classify himself, for the crocodile does seem to partake of the nature of several classes of animals. But most naturalists agree in calling him an amphibious reptile. Of course we all know that an amphibious reptile is one that can live either on the land or water, and this is just what the crocodile can do. He is happy in the water chasing his prey, which, when caught, he holds under water until it is drowned; but when this is done, he leaves the water and basks in the sun on the mud banks of rivers or marshes to devour his prey. Crocodiles are oviparous—that sounds like a very large word; but the little folks can learn, and the big little folks already know, that oviparous means bringing forth eggs, and, funny as it seems, the great sprawling, ugly crocodile is hatched from an egg about the size of those laid by a goose. The mother crocodile deposits

from twenty to sixty of these eggs in holes made in the sand or river side. Then, when the heat of the sun has hatched them out, she cares for the baby crocodiles with real maternal affection. But it is said that the male crocodile is a cruel father, and will devour his young unless prevented by his mate.

Crocodiles are not often found in salty water, but live in the rivers and marshy lagoons of tropical regions. They are not half so stupid as they appear, and will pretend to be dead if attacked. They will lie perfectly motionless when they wish to deceive an animal which they intend to capture. When the animal ventures near enough to what it thinks must be a harmless log, the shut eyes quickly uncloze, the great jaws open, and—snap! then the captured prey will struggle in vain.

There are three families of living crocodiles: Gavials, true crocodiles, and alligators. They grow to be sixteen or eighteen feet long, and are found in the rivers of Africa, Asia, and America. The common crocodile is a fair type of the family. It is found in great numbers in the Nile River, and by the ancient Egyptians was given a place among the gods. Temples were built in its honor, and in these live crocodiles were kept and fed upon the daintiest food. When these crocodiles died their bodies were

embalmed, and numbers of these mummies have been found in modern times by men who love to dig among the ruins of ancient cities. The alligator is simply a species of crocodile which is found only in North and South America.

FLETCHER ON SEALS.

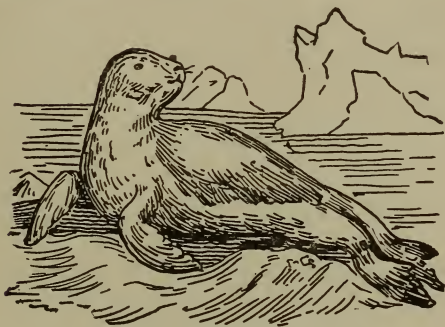
FROM San Francisco had come a wonderful box for Fletcher, filled with all manner of curious and beautiful things, and no one needed to open the letter that came with it to know that Uncle Stuart was the sender. The letter said: "In the box you will find, my dear boy, a sealskin cap, which I hope you will wear with pleasure. I want you to get down all your books on natural history and write me what you know about the queer little animal who was robbed of his coat to make your cap."

"I never saw any one like Uncle Stuart," said Fletcher, running his hand over the velvety surface of the cap. "He can hit upon more cunning ways to keep track of a fellow's progress than any one I know, except the Professor."

So the next day Fletcher took a brand-new pen and a fresh tablet, and this is the letter he wrote:

My Dear Uncle: That cap is certainly a beauty, and they all say it makes me look quite "swell;" but as that is slang, of which you don't approve, I had better not say much about it. I never supposed that seals were such interesting little creatures until that cap put me to studying about them.

They come under the head of marine animals, and they live entirely on the prey they capture in the water. But they are very fond of basking in the sun, and will lie for hours on the sandy beach if no one disturbs them. And yet—it seems strange, doesn't it?—the young seals do not seem to care much about the water, and often have to be forced into it and taught to swim by their mothers.



SEAL.

There are two different kinds of seals: hair seals and fur seals. The hair seals do not have such fine, soft under fur as the sea bears, as some people call the fur seals. But the hair seals are useful and valuable, because their skins make fine leather, and their oil is also in great demand. The most important fisheries for the hair seals are those of Newfoundland and Labrador, but there are many others. Thousands of men devote their lives to this business, and sometimes one steamer has brought in forty-two thousand seals, which would be worth over \$100,000. I think I shouldn't mind being a seal fisher myself, if

I could always be so lucky as that. But sometimes the poor fellows come home without a single seal, and then I guess things look pretty blue.

But my cap never saw the back of one of these hair seals, but grew on some poor fur seal—perhaps away off the coast of Alaska. It is not the outside fur that is so beautiful and fine, but the inner fur.

There is quite a difference in the size of the male and the female fur seal. The males, when grown, weigh from five hundred to seven hundred pounds; but the females weigh only from eighty to one hundred pounds.

I could write a much longer letter about seals, but I will be like Sam Waller and stop short, so that you'll "wish there was more."

Your loving nephew,

FLETCHER.



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